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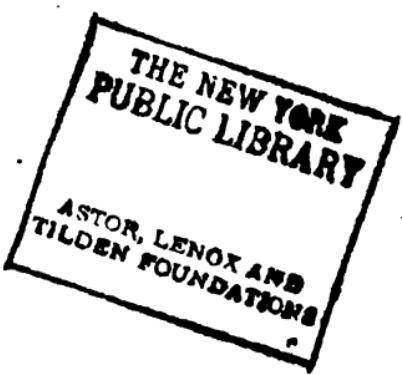
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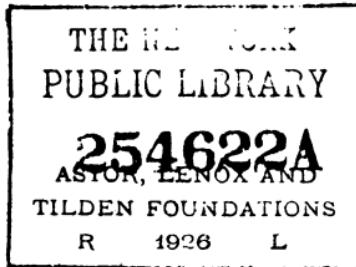
JACK'S STORY

AS TOLD BY HIMSELF.

By G. L. V.

[Mrs. Hartwell's Library]

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS story was told me by Jack. I give it to you, as far as possible, in his words. I do not think that I could write, or you could understand, what he says, without some verbal alteration. I feel quite sure that I have given you exactly Jack's thoughts; and if I were to say to him, "Jack, is this just what you told me about yourself?" he would reply to my question :

"Yes, that is my story exactly as I told you!"

JACK'S STORY

AS TOLD BY HIMSELF.

CHAPTER I.

THE first time I went to Sunday school, I didn't think I should like it, for I had generally spent my Sundays in playing about the streets; but I heard that boys in Sunday school got oranges and candies, and sometimes a present for Christmas. So just before Christmas I thought I'd go. They put me in a class with a very pleasant-looking young lady for a teacher; the boys called her Miss Gibson. She seemed so kind that it made me happy just to look at her. I'm glad that they did not put me under such a sober-faced woman as the teacher I saw in

the next class. Though I was the poorest-dressed boy among them, and sold papers for a living (and have a hard time at that), she spoke just as pleasant to me as to the boy that had on a blue neck-tie, and wore a watch. I told her I'd give her a Herald for nothing next day; she said she'd give me a paper that same day (not to be outdone, I suppose). Her paper had pictures in it; a sort of Sunday Illustrated Harper or Frank Leslie it looked like, and I was just as much obliged to her as if I could read it; but then I could not read a word. Miss Gibson told the boys things which sounded very queer to me, and which I didn't think were right, for I'd never heard the like before. She was talking to the boys about Christ forgiving our sins. I'd always heard the Priest does that, and then she spoke about the example Christ has set us, and she turned to me, and said she: "Jack, if a boy were unkind to you, how ought you to treat him?" "Knock him down," says I, and then the other fellows

laughed. I thought it was because, being so small for my age, they thought I couldn't do it, so I speaks up right quick, "I could do it, too," says I. Miss Gibson laughed. I suppose she thought me a right smart boy, but what do you think she said? Says she, "Jack, if a boy does an unkind thing to you, I think it would be better to try and do some kindness to him, and see how that would make him feel." "But he don't deserve it, ma'am," says I. "No, Jack, he may not deserve it, but we don't deserve the good things that God is all the time giving to us, and yet He is so good to us and so kind, and if we want to be like Jesus, we must be kind to every one, no matter how they treat us." "I don't want to be like Jesus," says I; "I don't want folks to kick me, and I not kick back again; why ma'am, when Pat Molloy gives me a poke in the ribs, you surely wouldn't have me give him a good word for such treatment?" "Yes, Jack," says she, "that I would, and then you may depend

upon it, Pat Molloy would be sorry he had given you the poke." "Not a bit of it, ma'am," says I, "he'd think I was afraid of him, and that that was the reason I didn't beat him. I know Pat better than you do." She laughed again such a pleasant laugh, not a bit offended at me, d'ye see, for speaking so plain, and not a bit inclined to put on a long face, and think me so wicked, but she goes on in the same cheery way, and says she, "Suppose Pat does laugh at you, and call you names, and make fun of you, our dear Saviour was treated worse than that, yet he never turned with angry words back upon the people who did it. I think, Jack, it would be easier to give Pat Molloy a good kick than to bear quietly the hard names he would call you; and if you mean that you are something of a coward, and are afraid lest he might call you hard names, if you don't whip him, why don't you say so?" I was just taken aback, for I'd never had it put to me in that light before. "I think, ma'am," says I, "it would

be a deal easier to give him a good licking than to stand still, and have him lick me." "So you are not brave enough to try to do the hardest thing, is that it?" says she. I didn't know what to say; this was all new to me; in all the days of my life I'd never heard folks talk that way before. "I think, ma'am," says I, "fighting comes kind of natural. My father, when he was alive, and we all lived home, used to whip us all round, just to keep his hand in. And Mike O'Flaherty, he and his wife are fighting and beating each other and the children all the time. All the folks in our alley fight and get put in the station-house. And the policemen, they knock the rest over the head, and that answers as well as fighting for them. And all the rich folks, they are trained to fight as soldiers. It seems to me as soon as one war is over, another is begun. Now some other parties are fighting, and that helps us poor boys sell the papers, for whenever there's a fresh battle, Tom Carter reads it for me, and tells me what to call out,

and I sell twice as many papers ; so I think it's a good thing."

"It is not what our Saviour taught, Jack," says she ; "he wants us to be good to all, especially to those who treat us unkindly."

I couldn't take that in. Thinks I, that may do very well for Sunday schools and for girls, but it seems to me I'd feel mighty like a sneak, if I'd let a fellow crack me over the head, and I not give him as much back ; and yet I thought over what she had said would be the hardest to do, and I couldn't but own it would take a braver boy than I to take up with the names the fellows would call you if you didn't fight.

The whole matter was a puzzle to me, and I thought over it as I walked home ; indeed I got so full of it, that I didn't look where I was walking, and suddenly turning round a corner of the street, I run right against a fellow, and who should it be but Pat Molloy himself. We come so quick upon each other, that we both fell. I thought he'd done it on

purpose, and he thought the same of me; so, of course, we came to blows. A pretty stiff fight we had, with all the boys in the street shouting at us to go at it. Pat has the hardest fist ever you felt, and I am plucky if I am small, so we both stuck at it until we saw a policeman coming, and then we up and ran. I felt sore enough when I got home. I was pounded and bruised all over. One eye was all black and swollen, and my nose was bleeding. "I'd like to know if Miss Gibson means me to treat a fellow well who makes me feel as I do now," thinks I. I was laid up for a while. The next day I couldn't walk. Biddy Flaherty, from the next room, said if I'd only take a good glass of whiskey, I'd feel better; but somehow I didn't like whiskey. My poor mother, when she died, says to me, "Jack, never taste a drop; it's the ruin of soul and body." I knew she was thinking of my father, who died of it, so I've determined to mind her words, for she was about the only one ever was good to me; and somehow, when

Miss Gibson looked at me so kind and pleasant in the Sunday school, I couldn't help thinking of my poor mother. I was feeling so wretched that I didn't go out for a week; for having not much to eat all that time, I felt sort of poorly and not able to stand up. I concluded not to go to Sunday school any more, for I didn't believe in their ways of thinking. Not give it to Pat Molloy? You bet I would the next time I'd catch him! Yet for all, as I lay all day long and all night long alone on the heap of straw I called my bed, I'd keep thinking of Miss Gibson, and wished she'd come in and sit beside me, as my poor mother used to do years ago. And I couldn't help thinking how lonesome I was in the world.

CHAPTER II.

ABOUT two weeks after this, as I was selling papers along the street, calling, at the top of my voice, for somehow I felt weak yet, "Herald ! Tribune ! Times ! Herald, sir ? Times, sir ?" two lads came running along ; they were playing ; one was chasing the other. Rich men's sons they were ; I could see it with half an eye. The largest of the two ran smack against my arm as I held out a Tribune to a gentleman going the other way. Down fell all my papers, and slid off into the gutter, full of slush and melting, dirty snow. "You meant it, you did," says I ; "it was done on purpose." And I up with my fist and gave him the hardest blow on his cheek I guess he'd ever had. I was preparing to give him another, when a policeman I hadn't seen caught me by the arm, and gave me such a shaking, that I felt as if my

breath was clean gone. "You little fighting rascal! do I catch you at your old tricks?" says he. "It was all my fault, Mr. Johnson," says the boy to the policeman. "'Twasn't," says the other boy. "Take him up, Mr. Johnson! arrest him! he's a good-for-nothing vagabond. The impudent jackanapes! to treat a gentleman's son that way. See, Charley's face is swelling already!" "Please don't talk so," says the fellow I had struck; "leave him to me, Mr. Johnson. Poor lad, I fear I've spoiled all his papers. Come, let us pick them up. What's your name?" "Jack," says I. He gathered up all my papers, and put the dry ones in one pile and the wet ones in another. "There, Jack," says he, "there is fifty cents' worth that I've spoiled for you. I'm sorry, but I couldn't help it. I've got but ten cents in my pocket; you come home with me and I'll give you the money." I looked at the boy in perfect amazement. There was his face already beginning to swell from the blow I had given him, and he telling

me he would pay for my papers that had rolled into the gutter. Somehow I couldn't understand it. Presently I heard Pat Molloy's voice in the crowd of street boys that had gathered behind us. Says he, "Dont yer go, Jack, he's a goin' to nab yer and shet yer up!" Somehow that seemed to me so much more natural, that I up with my fist, for he had sent away the policeman, and was about to give him another blow. I had thought myself a great fighter, and that I was pretty strong; but if you believe me, the boy just took hold both my wrists, and held me so firm that I couldn't budge an inch. Then he looked me right full in the face, and I declare he looked just like Miss Gibson. He had just her eyes, and when he spoke, it was just with her pleasant voice. "Jack," says he, "I'm sorry you don't believe me." The anger seemed to go right out of me. I gave right up. "Yes, I do," says I. He let go my wrists, and I followed him just as a dog follows his master. He carried my papers, and

I followed close behind him. He led me into the basement of a large and handsome house; he laid the papers on the table, and made me count them, to see how many were spoiled and missing. Then he went up stairs and brought me the money for the exact number that I had said were lost. "I am sorry, Jack, that I have so far interfered with your morning's work," he said, "but I hope you will do well. If you don't feel satisfied with what I have given you, say so." It was not so much the words, as the tone and the kind look he gave me, which made me feel very bad, particularly as I looked up and saw how his face was swelling from the blow I had given him. "Take back the money, sir," says I; "the face I've given you is worth more than that; take it back." "No, lad, no," says he, "you'll want it to buy a fresh stock to-morrow." So he let me out of the basement door, and I don't think I ever felt so mean in my life.

The next day when I bought the morning papers, thinks I, I'll give him the very first



paper. So I ran on fast as I could, and pulled the bell. "Here," says I, as the door opened, "give this *Times* to the lad I hurt yesterday." Looking up, who should it be in the doorway but Miss Gibson herself. "Why Jack!" says she, "was it you who gave my brother such a blow yesterday?" I looked ashamed, I'm sure, for I felt so, but she did not look angry, as I thought she would, and as does Ann Molloy, when I've been giving Pat a beating. But she looked right in my eyes, and her face was kind of sad and troubled. "If I had known he was your brother, Miss, I shouldn't have done it," says I, "for you're the only one ever speaks kind to me;" and I felt like crying, for I was kind of weak and cold and hungry, but I wouldn't have let any one see me cry for anything. Pat Molloy had so often called me a cry-baby that I didn't dare to cry any more, no matter how I felt. She laid her hand on my shoulder, and as I looked up, there were tears in her beautiful eyes, as she stood looking at my

dirty, bruised face, my thin, torn jacket and stiff, red, cold hands. "Come in and get some breakfast, Jack," she said. She took me into the kitchen, and stood by while the cook poured out some coffee for me, and piled up my plate with hot cakes. Oh! how hungry I was. I don't think anything in the world ever tasted so nice as that breakfast! "O Miss Gibson," I says, as the thought suddenly came over me, "this is what you meant by doing good to those who don't treat you well, isn't it! O, I am so sorry I treated your brother so, I don't deserve this breakfast, indeed, Miss, I don't!" "You feel a great deal more sorry than if my brother had beaten you in return, don't you?" "Yes, I do, Miss Gibson—and—and—I believe now I begin to understand better what you said to me in Sunday school. I think I'll never do so again to your brother or any one like him, and I'll do all I can for you, ma'am; you just try me, and see if I won't, because *you did* return good for evil; but I can't act after this

fashion to Pat Molloy, indeed, miss, I can't; I must beat him every time he beats me." "O Jack," says Miss Gibson, "I'm sorry to hear you say so, for the Bible teaches us our duty plainly. Listen to this verse—'If any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.'" "Pat wouldn't understand such actions," says I. "You've never tried him," says the lady. "Well, I'll try him for your sake, miss," says I. "No, Jack, not for my sake, but for Jesus' sake." It seemed hard for me to promise. I didn't know much about Jesus, and I didn't love him, but I did love the kind lady and her brother who'd been so good to me. To please her I said I'd try, but I didn't much think I could.

CHAPTER III.

I WENT about my work as usual that day. I felt good-natured, for I kept thinking about what Miss Gibson had said, and thinks I, I'll be good, and that will please her. I think that I might have got along for a week without feeling angry ; only one day coming down-stairs I met Ann Molloy. "Why, is that you ?" says Ann, "Pat said the Perlice-men had nabbed ye, and ye wus locked up." "What business has he to say so ?" says I, feeling very angry, for Ann has always such hateful ways, and sticks out her finger at you in such a sneering, provoking manner, it makes me mad just to come near her. Then she laughed out loud, and runs down the steps ahead of me. "Here's Jack got out at last !" says she to Pat who is sitting on the curb-stone. "Hullo, young un !" calls Pat to me, and seeing that I was preparing to run past

him, he stretches out his hand, and catches me by the leg. Down I fell. All the boys laughed. My first thought was to knock Pat down, for I was angry enough, but it suddenly came into my mind that this was the very chance of being good, which I'd looked for all the week. So I stops short. Now's your time, my man, says I to myself, and I held steady a minute so as to get sure of myself ; then I turns to Pat, and says I, " You hadn't ought to do so, I wasn't hurting you ! " " Come, fight it out," says Pat. " No," says I, " I'll not fight." " You think I kin beat yer ! " says he. Here I began to feel mad enough to go straight at it, but up spoke Tom Carter. " You needn't talk that way, Pat Molloy," says he, " if Jack *is* little, he can fight you, any way, you big bully ; don't you mind what he says, Jack—you go on, sell your papers." I didn't wait, for I was afraid if I staid longer I might begin to quarrel. So away I ran, and soon I was out of sight of the alley and all the boys who were watching

me there. I sold all my papers. When I got home that night, I met Ann Molloy crying on the door-step, "O Jack, is that you?" says she, for it was a mighty dark alley we lived in. "What's the matter?" asks I. "O, Pat's fell and broke his leg; Mike O'Flaherty carried him up-stairs, but I'm 'fraid to stay up there, he moans so; I'm 'fraid he's dyin'-Oh! Oh!" and she shrieked and howled as if she was crazy. I ran up to Mike's room, and there, sure enough, lay Pat. I looked at him; thinks I, he is dying sure enough. I raised him up, and got some water for him, but I didn't know what else to do. He looked so white, and he couldn't speak. I took some of my own pennies, and ran out, and bought an orange for him; I really didn't know what I'd best do. Mike and his wife were both out; I knew well enough she must be drunk somewhere. After a while Pat opened his eyes. He looked at me. I could just hear him as he said, "Stay by me." All night I staid alone with Pat.

He was in the top room of the house. I could see the stars through the broken window, and I wondered if Pat should die, whether he would go up there among the stars, and I wondered if my poor mother was up there. I cut up the orange with my jack-knife, and gave him a piece from time to time, for he seemed thirsty ; but before morning I fell asleep. The sun shone in my face, when I awoke. Pat was in a high fever, and as I sat looking at him, and wondering what was best to be done, Ann pushed open the door, and came in. "Why didn't you come and take care of him before ?" says I. "I was afraid," says she. "Now you come here and sit very still, and I'll go out and see what can be done ; now mind, Ann, you must keep very still," says I, and I went softly down stairs. When I reached the street, I really didn't know what to do next. The policeman had so often called me "a lying rascal," and a "fighting cock," and all sorts of names, and cracked me over the head and

about the legs, that I was afraid of him. I thought, at last, I would go and ask Miss Gibson what I ought to do. She was very kind, she always is. She seemed pleased that I had tried to take care of Pat. "Don't you feel better now, Jack, than if you had quarreled and been fighting with him?" she asked. "Yes, miss, indeed I do," I answered, "and he like to die; why miss, suppose he should die, I'd always have it in mind that the last time we ever were together we had a fight." Miss Gibson promised to speak to her father about having Pat taken to the hospital; and she said that her brother would go to see him, and perhaps she would go herself. All that she promised she did. Pat was taken to the hospital. I went to see him as often as I could, and I always found he had something nice which Miss Gibson had sent him. Pat was more hurt than we thought; he had a rib broken as well as a leg, and he didn't seem to get better. He coughed very badly, and somehow he began to look very white and

thin. Miss Gibson had him moved to the house of a very nice woman whom she paid to take care of him, for she said he had consumption, and would never get well, and the Doctors could do nothing more for him. Pat was kind of changed. He didn't seem like Pat Molloy any more. He got to be kind-spoken and good-hearted. The woman who took care of him was very kind to him, and used to make good things for him to eat. As he lay there on a clean bed, with a little table beside him, with oranges and grapes on it, and the pleasant sunlight falling on the floor, I would look at him and say, Is this really Pat Molloy! One day he calls me back as I was going away, (you see I went every day to see him ; sometimes I'd have an apple, and sometimes only a newspaper, but I liked to bring something every day for him in memory of past times), he calls me, and says he, "Jack, you must forgive me for all my ugly ways towards you ; I've been very bad to you, and you're so kind to me!" I was clean beat out.

I didn't know what to say. I couldn't keep in the tears. Oh! thinks I, it's I am the wicked one. "Pat," says I, "what's that verse Miss Gibson gave me to learn; this is just like it, for I feel sorry now that I ever beat you, or got angry, or cross; I feel as I never did before towards you." "That's what the Bible says, Jack; I begin to think if we only do as the Bible says, we'll find it all come out right."

CHAPTER IV.

I WAS walking one day past a fruit shop. There were piles of oranges, bananas, apples, and grapes at the door. Thinks I, how Pat Molloy would relish an orange. I had just five cents to spare; that ought to buy an orange. I looked long and steadily at them, so as to be sure and pick out the very best for the price. Then I took up the one I had fixed upon and examined it. The shopman saw me take the orange; he thought I was going to run off with it. "Put down that orange!" says he. "I was going to buy it," says I. "No such thing," called out the fellow, looking at me as if I was a thief, and coming forward to take the thing out of my hand. I had a five-cent piece in the same hand with the orange, and, as he jerked me by the shoulder, the money fell into a great basket of potatoes. The man would not look

for it himself; neither would he let me. He said I hadn't any money, and he'd have me taken up if I didn't clear out. All my life I've been threatened with being taken up; I'm used to it. People seem to take for granted that poor boys like me will lie and steal and swear. It seems as if they expected it in us, so we get used to being called liars and thieves, and we think it natural to lie and steal, and we do it. I ran away, but I was mad because I had lost my money, and I shook my fist at the man when I got beyond his reach, and called him bad names. I promised myself that I'd get the worth of my money out of him, and more too. So I watched, unseen by him, for more than an hour, and when he'd gone off to get his dinner and the shop-boy was waiting on other customers, I crept round slyly. I watched my chance, and when no one was near, I slipped two nice oranges into my pocket and ran off. I went straight home, for it was near time to get the evening papers, and hid

my oranges under the bed. Then I got the rest of my money which I used to keep hidden in a hole in the floor, right under the beam by the head of my bed. Just after I ran out into the street it began to rain. A boy can't sell as many papers when it rains. Gentlemen won't stand still in the rain to buy. Their coats are all buttoned up; they can't get at the money so easily. At such times I used to go to the hotels and business places. This takes longer, so it was too late when I had got rid of all my papers for me to carry my oranges to Pat Molloy that night. I kept thinking all the time how glad he would be to see me, and what he would say when I showed him what I had bought for him. I thought Miss Gibson would be glad too, for hadn't she said we must be kind to every one, even to a boy who has beat you? Pat had thrashed me many a time, and now I had forgiven him for doing it, and was going to make him a present. I thought I was a very good boy, and wondered, by myself, if

"the dear Jesus," as Miss Gibson called Him, didn't think I was very good. I could hear the pit-pat of the rain falling on the roof, for my bed was in the corner of the garret, and I began to think that because I was so good Jesus didn't let the roof leak just over my bed, as it did in so many other places, and I had a great mind to thank Him for that, as well as for His making me so good; but I felt rather sleepy, so I put it off until some other time. I got the two oranges out from under the straw and laid them right beside my head, so that I should see them the very moment I waked up in the morning. I slept very soundly that night, for I was tired, but I woke up early, as usual, and my first thought was of Pat and the oranges. I stretched up my hand to feel for them in the uncertain morning light, but they were not there. I jumped up to look if they had rolled down under the rafter; they were not there. I hunted for them everywhere, but they were not to be found. I had lost things before. When

Biddy Flaherty could lay her hands on anything, she'd be sure to carry it off and sell it for a drink. I had no doubt but she had come into my room when I was asleep and stolen my oranges. I went direct to her room; both she and Mike were off. I felt certain then that they were both off on a spree. I was mad enough. I kicked against the door. There was nothing in the room that wasn't already broken, or I think I would have smashed it to pieces. Then I ran out into the street, feeling about as ill-tempered as a lad could feel. It was too early to go to Pat Molloy. I knew the woman who kept house and had the care of Pat wouldn't be awake at such an early hour, so I thought I'd make the most of my time and go to the steamboat wharfs or the depots, and sell some papers for the early trains. I did so well that day that I didn't get ready to go and see Pat as soon as I thought to, and as I went up his street, who should I meet but

Miss Gibson, and I followed her to Pat's room.

I told her the whole story about the oranges. She seemed to feel uncommon sorry for me. "Jack," she says, "Biddy Flaherty did a very wicked thing when she took those oranges, didn't she?"

"Very, ma'am, a very wicked thing, and I hope she'll be well beaten and locked up in jail, and kicked till she's most dead!"

"But yet she only did the same thing you had done just before," says Miss Gibson.

"I don't understand you, Miss," says I.

"You see, Jack, you stole the oranges from the man, and Biddy stole them from you."

"But I only stole one, for there was my five-cent piece went for the other, and I didn't take it for myself either. I was going to give them both to Pat, but Biddy stole them to sell for a drink."

"I am sorry that you should steal, no matter for what reason. I do not think it makes it the less stealing because you did it for Pat.

Remember, Jack, that a lie is always a lie, and stealing is always stealing. If you take that which does not belong to you, you are stealing, and God forbids us to do that. You are a thief, if you stole an orange, just as well as Biddy. You see how wicked it is in her, but you do not see how wicked it is in yourself."

"I don't think I'm as bad as Biddy Flaherty, miss!" says I, getting very angry.

"No, Jack, I don't think you are. I should be very sorry if you, at ten or twelve, should be as wicked as Biddy at forty. But I don't want you to get like her; and if you steal, you are taking the first step that way. I don't suppose that when she was of your age, she was any worse than you are now; but she keeps going on in sin and wickedness, and if you go on in sin you will be in time perhaps worse than she is now."

"Do you think I could ever be as hateful and wicked and thievish as she is?" I asked,

feeling rather frightened as I thought of poor, miserable, drunken Biddy.

"You will be exactly the same, if you go on committing the same sins," says Miss Gibson, "and that is why I want you to stop now, before you take another step in that road. I want you to ask God to help you, and then try very hard not to do such things any more. If you wanted to go up-town, in which direction would you turn, Jack?"

"Why, that way, miss," says I; "that is the way that leads up-town."

"And if you wanted to go down-town, which direction would you take?"

"That way," says I, pointing the opposite way; "that way leads down-town."

"Exactly so. Now, there is a road that leads to heaven, and there is a way that leads to hell; they are opposite roads. If you steal, lie, break God's commandments, and never ask the dear Jesus to love you and help you, you are on the road that leads to hell. If you try not to do such things; if you try to do

what is just and right, and try to love God, and ask the dear Jesus to help you, and to teach you; if you ask him to forgive your sins for the dear Jesus' sake, He will help you, and He will guide you into the road that leads to Heaven."

"I didn't mean no harm, miss, by just taking the oranges."

"I don't think you meant harm, Jack; but it wasn't right, and I hope you'll not do so again."

"No, ma'am," says I; "I'll try not to."

"Are you sorry, Jack, you did so?" she asks.

I was kind of puzzled what to say. I didn't mean to do so again, if she didn't like it, but I can't say that I felt very sorry about it; so I said nothing.

"Do you think you feel sorry enough to pay the man this five cents for the orange you stole?" she asks.

"No, ma'am," says I; "I ain't going to give him no five cents for taking that orange. He'd only call me a thief, and —"

"But wouldn't that be true?" asks Miss Gibson.

"Yes, ma'am; but for all that I ain't going near the man. I'm sorry for your sake that I took the orange, because it makes you sorry, and I'll try for your sake not to do so again."

"I wish you would try for Jesus' sake," says she.

"No, ma'am," says I; "you are kind and good to me, and I love you; but I don't know anything about Jesus, and I don't love him, and I don't want to love him."

"Ah, Jack," says she, "it's precisely because you don't know Jesus that you don't love him; you don't know how kind and good he is."

Pat had been looking from one of us to the other all the time we had been speaking, and he hadn't said a word; but it seemed now as if he couldn't keep still. "O Jack, my boy," says he, "I've always thought just as you do, but since I've been lying

here on this bed I begin to see. I've been mistaken. Do talk to him, miss, as you talk to me about Jesus, and then he will begin to see how good and kind He is."

"No, Pat; I am only going to give Jack just now one thing to think about while he is off at work, and out at play, and that is this : God so loves us that, even while we were sinners, he sent his dear Son Jesus to die for us. You cannot forgive the fruit man ; you cannot even own to him that you have done wrong. You cannot pity, forgive or feel sorry for Biddy Flaherty, and yet God is all the time pitying you, and loving you, and helping you, although you have sinned a great deal more against Him than any one has against you. Now remember, Jack, that Jesus loves you, and that you grieve Him when you do wrong."

I promised Miss Gibson that I would try to do right, but that I didn't believe much in myself. She told me, she didn't want me to believe in myself, but to ask God, and He

would help me. Then she asked me, if I said my prayers every night. I told her no. Then she told me when I was in trouble, I was to say, "Please God, to help me for the dear Jesus' sake." I told her, I was in a hurry just then, I couldn't stay any longer; so I bid her and Pat good bye, and hurried off to do an errand for a gentleman who had promised me twenty-five cents for the work.

CHAPTER V.

IN order to make you understand what I am now going to tell you, I must go back and relate to you something which happened long before this. My father died before my mother, although my mother had been sick as long as I can remember. I think she must have had consumption, for she coughed all the time, and looked very thin and white like Pat Molloy, and he told me that the Doctor said he had consumption. There were four of us children ; I was the oldest. Birdie, we called my sister, because she had such a sweet voice to sing ; she was two years younger than I ; then my little brother Jim, then the baby. I really don't know what her name was, but we always called her Tiny. When father died mother got a place for Birdie, and she was out at service, but some way we lost track of her. It distressed poor

mother very much, and I cannot forget how she cried when I had looked for Birdie a whole day, and had to come home, and tell poor mammy that I couldn't find her, the folks had moved, and taken her with them. She died that night, but before she died, she says to me, "Jack, I put all the children in your care; may the Lord help you. Try and find Birdie, tell her from me to be a good girl, and to help you take care of the children." She tried to say more, but she could not, for all suddenly she fell back in bed, and there she lay still and white. We all cried "Mammy! mammy! O speak to us, tell us what to do!" but she neither spoke nor moved. Jim began to cry out so loud that the baby was frightened, and she began to cry, and I just put my arms round mammy's neck, and buried my face in the pillow on which she lay, and there I cried silently, for I felt so miserable. By and by, I think, we must all have fallen asleep, for I remember nothing more until the sun was shining in the room,

and some one raised me up. It was Tom Carter's mother. There were tears in her eyes, as she took me away from poor dead mother, and she said to me in a very kind way, "Oh, my poor Jack, I feel so sorry for you!" Mother looked exactly as she did the evening before ; I was afraid to speak aloud, I could only go in the corner and cry. Mrs. Carter was as poor as we ; she could not help us much, but she had mother buried, and took us to her room. Then she spoke to some good ladies in the church which she attended, and they got some money from the poor fund of the church, and they paid her awhile for the board of us children. After a while a poor woman took Tiny in place of a child she had lost, and a lady took little Jim in her family. I was put in a shoemaker's shop, and I was to have my board for running errands and calling the master when any one came in the shop ; but I didn't like the work, so I ran away. At first I lived by begging and sleeping anywhere I could ; but at last I took to

selling papers, running errands, and doing whatever I could find to do. I then hired the corner of a garret, and had that as my home.

I could not forget what mother told me about taking care of the children. I went to see them whenever I could, but I didn't feel satisfied with the care they got. Tiny was very small and thin and pale. She had sore eyes, and the woman that kept her—Mrs. Dunn's her name—went out to wash and iron, and left Tiny locked up until she got home. I did so wish some one would take the poor thing who wouldn't have to go out to work and lock her up alone in the house. Little Jim got along better; but the lady he calls "mother" doesn't like to have me see him. She would rather Jim had no friends, and she wouldn't let me talk to Jim unless some one was by, for fear I might make him bad. Then he gets dressed up in fine clothes, and feels as if he was above me. If I hadn't promised mother to look after the children, I never would have gone near Jimmy—never,

never. Most of all, I felt bad about Birdie. We used to be everything to each other, Birdie and I. If any one gave her an apple, or the least bit of cake, or anything else, she always shared with me. If any of the boys or girls in the alley beat me, Birdie always came to help. Many and many's the fight we had for each other. I did think Birdie must be dead. If she was living anywhere in the world, I think she'd run and look for me; much more now that two years had gone by, and she hadn't been found.

CHAPTER VI.

AS I had told Miss Gibson and Pat Molloy that day as I left them, a gentleman, who often gets me to run errands for him, wanted me to go far up town. He said I should have twenty-five cents when I came back to him with the answer. So, as I left Miss Gibson and Pat Molloy that morning, I started on my way. I went to the place, and got a note to bring back to the gentleman. As I was crossing a fashionable street, full of handsome houses, I saw an old fellow playing a harp and a girl with a tambourine. I shouldn't have noticed them at all only just then the girl began to sing. Her voice sounded so much like Birdie's, that I couldn't go on. I forgot the twenty-five cents the gentleman had promised me. I forgot everything just then, but the thought that, somehow, my dear Birdie had come to life. I ran over the way

and down the block until I came near. Her back was towards me; the man shook his head and told me to clear out, but nothing could have stopped me, not even a policeman, from going round in front of the tambourine girl and looking in her face. It was ! it was ! “Oh, my own Birdie !” I said. She stopped singing ; she held out her tambourine at arm’s length, as if she did not know what she was about, and then her face became so white, oh, so white ! that it seemed as if her very lips lost their color. She could not speak, and I held her in my arms while she tried to gasp out something. I could not understand what she meant, but I thought she was dying. It seemed to me as if she had been dead these two years, and now had come back to me only to go again, so I held both her hands tight, and said, “Oh, Birdie, don’t die again ; come home with me !” All this took but a minute, and by this time the ugly man with the harp found out what was going on, so he flew at me as if he was a tiger ; but I am

strong, if I am small, and I felt that time as if I had something to fight for. When he thought to knock me down and run off with Birdie, I dodged his fist, and gave him such a blow as he did not expect. "Run, Birdie, run," I cried, "I'll follow you in a minute." But she stood still kind of dazed, so I did not dare run off without her, and the old fellow at me again, but quick as lightning I jumped aside, and then nimbly flew at him; but as he turned to grab me, he stumbled near the curb-stone and fell, striking the back of his head very heavily on the cobble-stones of the street. This was a lucky chance for me. I took Birdie by the arm; I almost dragged her along, for it seemed to me as if she had no strength. I found we should speedily be caught at this rate, for it seemed as if Birdie had lost all power of hurrying. My poor mother used to think me quick-witted, even while she was alive; but I have had to fight my own way along so much, that it seems as if my wits must have got sharper every day.



OLD HARPER.—Page 46

So all the while I was dragging poor Birdie along, I was contriving how I should manage. We had just turned a corner. I saw a large packing-box standing at the foot of some cellar steps. Quick as a flash I carried her down the steps; the box, oh, how lucky! was empty. I meant to hide her behind it; but the open side was towards the inside of the cellar, so I almost pushed her in, telling her in a quick whisper, to keep still and stay there until I came back. Then I flew out of the cellar, just in time to cross the street and turn the next corner before I heard steps following. It was as I thought—the old harp man was chasing me, but he dared not leave his harp, and he could not go very fast with that on his back. So he called for the police, and shouted, and tried to get up a row. I called also for the police, as if I was his friend helping him, and I kept just far enough ahead of him so that he could not possibly catch me. By this time there were a dozen or more boys in the crowd to see what the fuss was about · and

as the man hadn't seen me but for a moment, and as the blow on his head had made him confused, he did not seem exactly to know which boy he was after. There was a big boy who had on a cap just like mine, and the man seemed to think he was the one. As the boy knew nothing about what was happening, he didn't walk so fast as I did, so the old harp man caught him, and was about to give him the good beating he meant for me. Just then a policeman came up, and I didn't stop to explain matters, I can tell you. Away I ran entirely round the block, and came up behind just in time to see the harper and the boy both carried off, for they had, it seems, come to blows before they saw the policeman. I loitered around until the street was entirely clear, and then very slyly I stole off to the steps where I had hidden Birdie. There she lay, either asleep or dead ; at first I couldn't tell which it was. My strength then seemed quite gone. If she was dead, oh, what could I do ! I took her hands in mine and rubbed

them. "Oh, Birdie, Birdie!" I said, "don't die yet!" At last I thought I heard her ask for a drink. How was I to carry water down here? I had no cup, even if the water was in the street, which it wasn't. Then I remembered that Biddy O'Flaherty used to say that whiskey was a "cure-all," and I determined to get some whiskey, if it took every penny I had. Only give me something to do, and it seems to set me all straight. When I stood looking at poor Birdie, wondering what to do, I felt miserable; but now that I could do something for her, it seemed as if my strength was renewed. I had no need now of telling her to stay there until I should come back; she could not move, I could see that. In my pocket was the sum of fifty cents, the sales of papers the evening before. I went to a junk-shop and bought two bottles which would hold a pint each. One I filled with water from a hydrant. Then I went to a liquor saloon and bought some kind of drink made of whiskey, and this I put in the other

bottle. Next I went into a bakery and bought two rolls and a few crackers. Off I ran in great haste to the cellar steps. Although I had been gone nearly half an hour, Birdie lay just as I had left her. I put the whiskey bottle to her lips and forced her to drink nearly the half of it. I watched by her for minutes, which seemed like half hours.

Soon the color came in her lips, and then in her cheeks, and then she opened her eyes and looked at me, and began to cry, not loud like street children, but softly as if her heart was broken, and she did not dare to speak loud. She held my hand tight, as if she was afraid she might lose me. When I saw the great tears roll down her cheeks, and she crying so softly, I declare it did go right to my heart. I just tried in my silly foolish way to comfort her as I had seen mother comfort the children. I patted her on the cheeks, and rubbed her hands, and called her my own dear darling Birdie. Then I poured some of the whiskey on a roll, and I got her to eat it.

I thought it seemed to revive her even more than the whiskey, and then I persuaded her to eat the crackers. For more than an hour we sat there in the great packing-box, entirely screened from the street, and with only light coming through the cracks of the box to make it like an hour after sunset. Then I began to remember that I had promised the gentleman to hurry with the note; so I knew I ought not to stay. I dared not leave her, and yet I dared not take her with me, for she was so weak that if the harper had seen us, he could very easily have caught her again. This box was certainly the safest place for her, cramped as it was for us both to crawl in, it was the safest place for her to stay until evening. She was now so much better that I could make the arrangement with her that she was to stay there, not to stir out until I should come for her. She seemed to think that I was going to call mother to come to her. I did not undeceive her by telling her of mother's death. I also saw that she was suffering from hunger.

I knew then why she had been so faint, and so unable to walk. I gave her the other roll, and the crackers, the bottle of water, and the rest of the whiskey ; then I bid her good-bye and told her to try and sleep, after she had eaten up the things I left with her, and not by any means to stir out. When I got out in the street, you may be sure I ran very fast to make up for lost time. I was quite out of breath when I reached the gentleman ; he had some friends talking with him, and I think he must have been so much engaged that he did not notice that I was behind time. The note I brought, it seems, needed another in reply, so the gentleman said if I would come back in two hours he would give me another quarter, and send me back to the same place. Nothing could have pleased me better. This was just exactly what I wanted ; for it would take me in the very direction I had to go to see Birdie. So promising the gentleman I would return in two hours, I went off to my garret-room to prepare a place for Birdie,

when I should bring her home. I borrowed a broom from about the only woman in our alley who owned one. Then I swept the room, raising such a dust as I hope never again to see in any room which I call mine. Poor mother was very neat, and I think that we children all inherited a love of neatness and order from her. I had never thought of the condition of my room so long as I was alone; but now when I was to bring Birdie here, it came upon me very suddenly that the place was not very nice. I should have borrowed a pail and scrubbed the floor, as the sweeping did not improve it very much, but I feared it would not be dry enough. So I shook up the straw that I called my bed. Then I raised up the board next to the rafter under which I kept my money hid, and took out my hoarded store to count it over. I hesitated long as to whether I should take out enough to buy some kind of blanket for my bed. Birdie was all the world to me. Yes, I concluded I would buy her a blanket; but, alas! I did not know

how much such things cost, and when I priced one hanging at the door of a cheap shop, I sighed and put my money back in my pocket. Yet I couldn't bear to go back to my garret with nothing in my hand; so, after pricing various articles, all of which were far beyond my means, I at last bought a cup for ten cents which had on it in gilt letters "For a Good Girl." Why I bought it I'm sure I can't tell; only that I loved Birdie. I had no table to put it on, no chair, no bench, only a soap-box which served me as a seat. That and my straw bed were my sole possessions. This room which I called mine was partitioned off from the huge garret of what had once been a handsome old style house. The oval window in the south gable was in this room; perhaps I ought not to call it a room; it was nothing more than a large store closet under the eaves.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER I had taken the letter, and done my errand, I went back to Birdie in the great packing-box. There she was fast asleep, smelling so strong of the whiskey that I was almost frightened, for it reminded me of Biddy O'Flaherty. I think she was under the influence of liquor as much as Biddy ever was, for I had not thought of the weak state she was in, and I had poured down her throat almost as large a drink as a confirmed drunkard would have taken. I felt worried at what I had done. I thought of my poor mother's words, "Never take a drop, Jack ; it will ruin you, soul and body." I flung the empty whiskey bottle in the street, and broke it in a thousand pieces. I did not know what to do for Birdie ; it was something so new for me to have any one beside myself to care for. Up from my heart went a great cry for help ; help

for myself, help for Birdie was what I wanted. I then remembered what Miss Gibson had said about God being a help in time of trouble. So I cried to the Lord, and I really think he helped me. A while after Birdie roused up. She looked bewildered and frightened when she saw me. Indeed she seemed to have all the time a wild look, as if she was afraid of something or somebody. She held both my hands very tight, as if afraid I might run away. "Oh, Jack!" she said, "is all this a dream? Where is mother? Are you sure it's you, Jack? Are you sure you will let me stay with you and mother?" "Birdie," said I, "you shall never leave me again—never—never. Come, let us go home now; are you able to walk?" It was now getting dark; the lamps were just being lighted. It was a cold, gusty night, early in the autumn. I wanted to get her away from that part of the town while it was night, lest the harper should be let out of the station-house and should find us. But poor Birdie could hardly walk. She com-

plained of a headache, and she said her head swam round. I knew this was the effect of the liquor. When I got her in the street her old fear seemed to come back, and she wanted to run away—anywhere so as only the old harper did not find her, but she could hardly walk from the effect of the whiskey. I think if I had not loved her so much that I could think of nothing else, I would have been ashamed to walk the streets with her, her gait was so unsteady, and she looked so like a drunken woman. The open air made her feel better; soon she was able to walk faster; then we hurried on, dodging into the shadows of the stores and houses every time we saw a rough-looking man the size and appearance of the harper. The distance never seemed so great; but at last we reached our alley, and I led Birdie up to my garret. Until this time, I think, she expected to meet mother and the children, and to be led to the rooms we used to have.

When I brought her into my poor attic

room and made her sit down on my box, I felt as if I could hardly tell her the whole story of mother's death. I untied her old hood. I took off her faded shawl, and folded it up as if it had belonged to a queen, and laid it, with her hood, on the bed. She had complained that her shoes hurt her feet, so I took them off, and rubbed her feet to warm them. I did not look up in her face, for I kept thinking how I should tell her about mother's death. My tears fell on her feet. She raised my head up with both hands, and looked me full in the face. When she was a child she had large brown eyes like mother's. Oh, such beautiful eyes! Now, as she looked at me, her face was so much paler and thinner than I ever had seen it before, that she looked as if her face was nothing only eyes. And if eyes ever speak, hers did then, and told me of all the love in her heart for me, and that she was not used to kindness or love; had not had any since she left me. She burst into tears, and so did I; and there we cried and

cried all alone in the light of the street lamp that shone in our room. Yes, we were all alone in the world, my poor Birdie and I! But we had each other.

Then the child became quiet, and sat looking at me with longing eyes; eyes that asked the question which her lips refused to ask; eyes that dreaded what the coming answer might be!

She did not speak; she only looked at me. Then she turned slowly round and scanned my desolate garret, the time-stained rafters overhead, the cobwebs on the dusty walls, the blue-flies buzzing on the specked window-glass, the stained floor, the bunch of straw, with its dirty coverlid, that served me as a bed. Oh, it looked dreary enough, but the aching heart of the little one was yet more dreary! I could not stand the questioning eyes that were fixed so sadly upon me, and the parted, silent lips, and the choking sob which she tried to smother. "Birdie," said I, "*my* Birdie." But she did not speak, only

her little thin hands were clasped the tighter. The autumn wind sighed through the lonely garret, and the draft from the cracked window fluttered the frayed edges of her poor thin dress against her bare feet. Then, as if the silence oppressed her, a heart-rending cry burst from her lips—"Mother?" And she looked into the distant gloom of the empty garret with an intentness that made me start as if I expected the dead mother to come back and fold the home-sick child to her heart. I do not believe the dead have power to come back to the living; I do not believe the dead are around us and can see and hear us; no heart could have withstood the anguish of that cry, no power could have held my mother back had she heard the call from her child! Once again, louder and in greater terror, she cried "Mother?" and the words echoed through the gloom among the rafters. I thought I heard a sigh; it was but the moaning of the wind. I went to her and put my

arms around her; her slight frame was shivering as if with cold; and yet through the torn sleeve which hung in tatters around her thin arms, I felt that her hands were burning hot, and I said, "My Birdie, she is dead; we are alone in the world, you and I, my poor Birdie!" She did not shriek; she did not cry, as I had expected; but the beseeching gaze she fixed upon me was more pitiful than any words could have been, and her calm despair told how in one sad moment she realized the uselessness of her call. The light seemed to go out from her eyes and the strength from her limbs. She held out her arms to me, and I caught her and laid her on my bed.

I told her all about mother's death, and, although I tried, I could not keep from crying. Somehow I didn't feel ashamed of crying before Birdie. I didn't know how lonely I had been until now; I didn't know how much I had missed mother and the children,

for I used to drive away such feelings. Then I began to think God was good to me, and that I would like to be good and to thank Him, and I told Birdie about Miss Gibson, and that I would ask her to come and see us and help us. But when I spoke of any one coming, then the old terror came over Birdie, and she shivered, and her great brown eyes opened so wide and looked so frightened, and she got all in a tremble. "What does ail you, Birdie?" I asked. "Oh, don't let anybody come in here but you, Jack; don't let them come in; they'll carry me away again, and the old harper will come—oh!—oh!" And she began to cry again—not a quiet, peaceful cry that might have done her good, but a frightened, terror-stricken cry, so that I thought she was getting crazy. By and by, she became quiet, and I persuaded her to lie down and go to sleep, and I would watch, so that the old harper shouldn't come and catch her; but you may be sure that as soon as she got asleep, I was so tired myself that I could

not keep awake, although I was both cold and hungry, for I had had nothing since breakfast. I soon fell asleep on the floor beside the bed on which Birdie lay.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN I awoke in the morning I noticed that Birdie's face was very red, her hands felt very hot; and when she looked up at me, she kept talking all the time to herself. I could not make her notice anything or speak to me. I don't know much about sickness, but I could see she was very sick. I didn't know what to do. I was afraid to let Biddy O'Flaherty know of Birdie's being found, for her drunken tongue would tell it all over the neighborhood, and then, perhaps, the harper would come and carry her off. There was Tom Carter's mother; I might have told her safely, but she earned her living by taking care of sick folks, and I knew that she was away nursing somebody. I thought I had better go and ask Pat Molloy. He was the only one I could go to. I felt so weak

from hunger that I had to take out money enough from my store to buy a good breakfast in the market, or I think I should have fallen down in the street. I didn't buy anything just then for Birdie, for I didn't know what I had better get. So I went to where Pat Molloy lived. The woman said Pat felt better, and told me to go right in and see him. He did look so comfortable in his nice bed, that when I thought of poor sick Birdie lying in a bunch of straw in my cold attic, I felt like crying, only I would not have cried before Pat Molloy for the world. Pat was glad to see me, and I told him all about Birdie. He knew her very well; but I hadn't finished my story before says he, "Jack, you must go to Miss Gibson." I told him how the thought of having anybody come there had frightened the poor child, but he said that was because she didn't know Miss Gibson. "Besides," says he, "what can you do, Jack? You must tell some one. She would die without some care. The policemen would find out about

uer, and they'd send her to the hospital, or the nuns would come and carry her off, and you'd never find her. Take my advice; go see Miss Gibson; ask her what to do."

"What would a fine lady like her care about Birdie or me?" said I, yet thinking all the time how much I wanted to tell her. "She's good and wise, Jack; she loves the 'dear Jesus,' as she calls Him, and wants to go about doing good among poor folks, just as He did. Now you go to her right off."

I took Pat's advice, and went to Miss Gibson. She was not at home. "There," said I, "just like these rich folks; never at home when you want them!" I am ashamed now when I look back and think how I was always blaming Miss Gibson. "Ungrateful rascal!" she ought to have called me; but she was so patient, she never did. That was what she learned from "the dear Jesus," I guess.

I had to get my papers now, for I was already behind time. I had lost as much as a whole day's work even in the short while I

had taken care of Birdie, for in the middle of the day I never found much to do. Therefore, sick as Birdie was, I had to leave her, for our daily bread would depend on my earnings. I didn't seem to have much heart for my work, for I kept wanting all the time to go back to my room and see Birdie. On my way down town I stole a padlock with a key in it, which I saw carelessly left on a warehouse steps. I thought it would be so nice to have Birdie lock the door, then she would not be afraid when I was out. As soon as I had sold the papers I ran off home, only stopping to get a loaf of bread on the way. I found Birdie better; she did not have any fear, at least so she said, and she knew me, and was so glad to see me. I filled the pint-bottle with water in the street, and brought it up to our attic. I filled her new cup with the fresh water, and drank her health with it. The loaf of bread, the new cup, the bottle of water, and my jack-knife, were all spread out on the soap-box for a table. Birdie lay in

bed, I on the floor, with the soap-box table between us, and I felt as happy as a king. Birdie seemed happy too ; but now that it was daylight, and I could see her more plainly, I discovered that she was even more pale and thin than I had thought at first. She was so feeble that she could not sit up, and she would not touch the bread ; she just nibbled on a cracker, so that I should think she was entirely well, and not feel worried. She drank a great deal of water ; I thought it was for the pleasure of drinking out of her new cup. She was so proud of that cup, and I was so glad I had bought it. "It was just like you, Jack!" she said, and then I felt very proud.

I showed her the padlock I had stolen. "I'm so glad you took it, Jack," she said. "Now we'll lock everybody out, you and I'll live here by ourselves, and we'll steal the children back, and we'll live here by ourselves as we used to when mammy was alive." We made all our arrangements. Jimmy was to be left

where he was for the winter, for we thought he might not be willing to come, and then he would tell some one about us, and spoil our plans. But we agreed that I was to break into Mrs. Dunn's room some day she was out washing, and I was to carry off Tiny. I had many misgivings about keeping warm in the winter, but Birdie seemed so terrified when I spoke of telling any one of our plans, and getting help, that I was afraid she might run away, and that I should never find her again. I ventured once to say, "You know, Birdie, we can't have fire here; I have no stove. Last winter I used to steal into the ferry-house to get warm before I ran home and got in bed; or I would go, when it was very cold weather, to the newsboy's lodging-house; or I would do some bit of work for a liquor saloon, and stand at the stove until I got warm. But you and Tiny couldn't do that; how *would* you manage to keep warm?" "Oh, Jack, we will lie in bed until it comes warm weather! we would never get up all

winter, you know." Birdie was younger than I, and she couldn't stand the hard time we had had in the world as well as I could, and she hadn't got as quick-witted as I had. Somehow I felt that what she was all the time saying we could do, we never could; but I couldn't make her think as I did, and I was afraid, poor thing, to contradict her, she looked so weak and forlorn. Mammy used to say that I was the smartest of all the family, and I couldn't but see now that I had a great deal more knowledge of the world, and how to get along, and what to do, than Birdie had. I felt all the time that it wouldn't be very prudent to steal Tiny just yet until we could see how we could get along ourselves. I fully meant to steal her after a while, but thought we had better wait until we had made a trial ourselves of getting along.

There was a sort of bar on our door, which had been once fastened with a padlock. I had an eye to that when I stole the padlock, and while we were talking I had put it on

and locked it. Just then we heard steps coming up our rickety stairs.

Biddy O'Flaherty evidently was there, but not alone. She was showing some one up, and she talked very loud, as she always did when she was drunk, and that was half the time. "Is it there ye are, Jock?" she shouted from the lower platform. "Shure, here some wan a comin' fur to see ye!"

Birdie started up, and clung to me with both hands. She held me so tight that I was almost choked.

"Coom down, Jock, if ye bees there; here's a leddy to see ye."

"Don't, Jack, don't," cried Birdie. "Oh, I'll die if one comes here to take me away."

"But they shan't take you away," I said.

"Yes, they will, if they can get in here; don't let any one in, Jack."

"It must be Miss Gibson," I said. "She will do you good; let her come in."

"No, Jack, no," cried Birdie. "She's not good; she's bad, she's bad;" and then, oh,

what a vile string of names she called Miss Gibson. It sounded so much like Biddy O'Flaherty that I was frightened, for poor Birdie used to be such a quiet, good-tempered, pleasant-spoken child when mother was alive.

Presently I heard the light steps of a lady on the stairs and then a voice. I knew it to be Miss Gibson's ; she was speaking to a manservant who was with her, and seemed to be discouraging her from going up further. He said, " You'll get small pay, may be, Miss ; I wouldn't go further, to say nothing of the vermin ye'll get on ye, and the miserable thieves and pickpockets as haunts these places. They'll be sure to come out and knock ye down, Miss, and they'll steal yer purse and yer watch ; and oh, Miss, do come down. What *would* the master say if he knowed of yer comin' in sich places ! " " Oh, Birdie," said I, softly, " do let me go and open the door." But she shook her head, and held me tight fast. Then I heard the wily old Biddy speak. " Shure, Miss, I knows Jack well ;

he went out fornenst me jist the minint fore you coom in ; why didn't I think of it before yer leddyship coom up all these steps ; and if yee has ony message, or onything to lave for Jack, jist lave it with me, mem ; I'm his aunt, his mother's own sister." Oh, the old story-teller, the guileful old creature ; how I longed to break away from Birdie and open the door for Miss Gibson, and beg her to come in ; and how I longed to say " You lie ! " to old Biddy ; " You're nothing to me at all, and I would never get anything that's left with you." But poor Birdie stood before me, holding me tight fast, with those great sad eyes of hers opened wide with terror, and beseeching me, in a low tone, not to open the door.

" I will leave this basket full of nice things for Jack and his sister, whom, I hear, has come back to him very sick. I think these things may do her good. I do wish I could see the child. Pat Molloy told me she was here, and I don't think he would tell me a story," said Miss Gibson, hesitatingly.

"His sister?" asked Biddy, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes," said Miss Gibson, "his sister; isn't it so?"

Biddy hesitated a moment, only a moment. Then she put on the old beggar whine with which she had so often imposed on people, and I could hear her voice distinctly, and knew she was wiping her eyes with the corner of her dirty apron. "Shure, Miss, it wasn't two childer that me poor sister left; there was six of 'em, plazin' yer honor. I took care of three, and one on 'em died; and now I hes the care of Jock and his two sisters, and there's the baby to look after, and worrok is scarce; and 'dade, Miss, I finds it very hard gettin' along; but ef ye'll lave the things with me, I'll divide 'em all among the childer, and the Lord bless ye, and may his best blessing and the help of the Holy Vargin and all the saints, ever go with yees." I knew she was curtseying and wiping her eyes and making believe cry, and I burned so with anger I could hardly keep

still ; only there, right before me, stood Birdie trembling like a leaf, and holding me tight, and from time to time saying such bad words.

" I dont understand quite how this can be," said Miss Gibson. " Jack always told me he was alone in the world, and now Pat Molloy says he has a sister, and you say there is a large family. Somehow, I am afraid I am being deceived." I could hear that Miss Gibson's voice was trembling.

" Come, Miss, come down ; they're all a set of thieves and liars, every one of 'em. Come down, this is no place for the likes of a lady as you be ; they'll cheat you whenever they can." This was the servant man, and then I could hear Miss Gibson say, as she went down stairs :

" Well ! it's no use, however, that I carry these things home with me. You take the basket," turning to the man, " into this woman's room, and you," turning to Biddy, " O'Flaherty I think you said your name was,

you keep the things for Jack ; tell him Miss Gibson left them for him," and then they all went down stairs. I looked out of our window, and saw Miss Gibson enter her carriage and drive off. Birdie gave a sigh of relief. I sighed from shame and mortification. I said not a word to Birdie; I knew that if I spoke then it would be in great anger. I was ashamed of myself, ashamed of Birdie. I unbolted the door and went down to Biddy's room. She had just opened the basket, and was holding up a glass of jelly between her eye and the light to see how clear it was. "Those things are mine!" said I. She started at the sound of my voice, and at once put the glass back in the basket.

"If they bees yourn, then why didn't ye come and git 'em? You're a pretty one with yer lies about a sick sister. Get 'em, indade; I'd like to see ye," and she held the handle of the basket tight with both hands, and leaned over it, scowling at me with her bloodshot, bleared eyes, until she looked more

like a fiend than a woman. I could have wrenched the basket from her grasp, that she knew well: but she also determined, and that *I* knew, that she would upset the basket before I snatched it, and that rather than let me have the contents she would tread them on the floor under her feet. Had I been as false as she thought me, and had I made up a lie about having a sick sister, and thus imposed upon some lady to send me a basket of dainties, I would have fought for the basket as well as she, and the probability is neither of us would have got a thing fit to eat out of it. There were two reasons, therefore, why I did not try to get the basket. The first was, I was not so bad as she was, and would rather that she should have the contents than to have them ruined by a fight for them. And the second reason was, that I saw she knew nothing of my having Birdie, and thought my story had been all made up. If I was too eager to gain the basket, she might come up to my room afterwards, and so find out about

Birdie. "I will tell the lady what an old thief and a liar you are!" I said in my rage. She drew a hideous face at me, and laughed her dreadful drunken laugh. "Better tell the leddy what a thief and liar yer bees yersel'! He! he! he! Why didn't ye coom out and spake to the leddy yersel'? He! he! he! Ye didna dare hev her go in yer room and see no sick fambly, only yersel'. He! he! he! Ye thought she'd send just the basket wi' the mon, and ye'd tak' it yersel' on the stairs, an' no one'd be the wiser. It's Biddy O'Flaherty that hez the nice fambly of yourn to care fur and the sick childer. May the Holy Vargin presarve me, but it's a good joke as iver I heerd, and I'll tell on't when I get me next drink at O'Rourke's. He! he! he! And ye'll niver hear the last of the joke about yer nice largé fambly, shure as I'm alive!"

I turned pale with anger. I saw the old hag had the best of me. I could have knocked her down on the spot, but what good would it do? I slammed the door, without making

a single effort to regain the basket, and went up to my room and threw myself on the floor. Birdie saw how angry I looked. She began to call both Biddy and Miss Gibson a string of bad names. She hoped for all evil things to happen equally to them both. She expressed herself just as miserable, drunken Biddy might have done. I knew how pure and good, how beautiful, how kind, Miss Gibson was; and then there flashed upon me the knowledge I had never had before, of the great difference between Miss Gibson and ourselves. She stood before me the type of all that was good and noble; we were the type of deception, ingratitude, foulness, and sin. As she was above us, so was good above evil. How high was her great pattern the "dear Jesus" above the sinful inhabitants of this world! I saw for the very first time in my life what the Bible calls the beauty of holiness. I saw myself and Birdie, on the one side, full of meanness, ingratitude, and sin. I saw the dear Jesus in one of His

children. I could not have expressed this to you at that time; I only *felt* it then. Since then I have looked back, and understood the feeling. I also think that I have since then learned to understand how God overrules things for good, so that apparent losses may prove great gains; that one may lose an hour even of life, and yet gain it. If Miss Gibson could have seen all this that transpired between Biddy and me, she would have said, "My time is all lost! I have been cheated and imposed upon." Yet the whole contents of the basket, bestowed as was meant, could never have given me the view of God and goodness and holiness as I gained it then and there.

I believe the dear Jesus, for the first time in my life, let me see things as I ought always to see them.

When Birdie saw how angry I looked at first, and then, as I lay on the floor, how sad, after a while, I began to feel, she seemed sorry for me, and came and put her arms around

me, and called me loving names, and caressed me. It was a long, long time since any one had called me pet names and kissed and caressed me; none ever had since Mammy died. I believe I was always a kind-hearted boy, and it was very pleasant to me to have some one love and care for me; so after a while I got up and began to talk again with Birdie. I fully intended to scold her about the bad words she used, but somehow she looked so pale and thin, and seemed so fond of me, that I couldn't bear to say anything that she might not like.

We sat and talked together for a while, and then I told her I must go and earn our supper; so I went off to get the evening papers. I heard Birdie lock the door after me as I ran down stairs.

CHAPTER IX.

THAT night Birdie seemed very worry-some when I got back. She was so restless and uneasy that I did not know what to do to please her. I could see that she hadn't touched the loaf of bread; indeed, except the crackers, she hadn't eaten a thing all day. I said, "You are sick." "Not I," she answered; "I am never sick. When you and Tiny and I begin our housekeeping, you'll see how strong and well I'll be. I'll keep your clothes mended just as mammy used to do, and make frocks and aprons for Tiny and me." "You haven't any thread and needles, Birdie," I said, "and we haven't any stuff to make frocks and aprons of." After I had spoken I was sorry, for I saw Birdie began to look angry, although she did not speak. Her face was very flushed and red, and she trembled as if she felt weak. I

felt her hands ; they were very hot. " You have fever now," I said ; " go lie down." " No ! no ! " she exclaimed, quite angrily, " you mustn't say I'm sick. You only want to get rid of me. It is Tiny I want ; I will be all well when she comes."

I did not know what to make of Birdie, she was so changeable and so different from what she used to be. One minute she would be full of terror ; then again she would be kind and loving ; then, without much apparent reason, she would get angry. I began to fear that I would not be so happy with her as I had expected. That night her fear came on again. She talked in her dreams all night. She worried all the time about getting Tiny. I began to think that, perhaps, she was pining for Tiny, and would never get well until I brought Tiny to her. Towards morning her fever went off. I watched beside her nearly all night, for I did not feel very well myself; trying to sleep on the hard floor had given me cold ; indeed I could not sleep. I watched

the stars from our window, and wondered if mother looked down at us from up there, and then I thought of the "dear Jesus," as Miss Gibson used to say, and I felt, as before, that I was not good; that Birdie and I were so different from Miss Gibson, who had learned how to be good from Jesus; and if she was what the Saviour wanted us to be, then how wicked we were, for we were not even like her, much less like Jesus.

Birdie drank from her cup all through the night. I thought, in my ignorance of fever, it was because she liked the new cup—not because of fever. She asked me the first thing when she wakened, if I would go after Tiny. She said she had dreamt of her all night, and that she would never be well and strong until Tiny came. It was in vain that I asked her how she would get any stronger for having the child with her. She only cried, "Go fetch Tiny." After I had placed a bottle of fresh water, some more crackers, and a cup of milk on the soap-box beside her, I

went off to my work, thinking all the way if I had better get Tiny out.

It was a beautiful warm autumn day. There was very important news in the papers; we sold them very fast. I had as much as I could do for two or three hours. I was quicker than most boys at selling papers. I have sold two to some boys' one. I felt in good spirits. I got my breakfast in the market, and then sold more papers. When all the chance of more work that morning was over, I concluded that I would just go and make a call at Mrs. Dunn's, and see how matters stood. As it happened, she was ironing; she had only a few more pieces to iron, and would then fold up the clothes in her great basket and take them home, she said. She asked me if I would carry the basket home for her, and then she said she would give me five cents. I laughed at her offer. "Five cents, indeed! Gentlemen paid me twenty-five cents for less than that," I exclaimed. "Jack, you are a lazy, ungrateful boy," she

said. "Here I have taken care of your little sister these two years, and this is all the thanks I get." "You didn't take her for my sake or for her own. You wanted a little girl, and you hadn't any, so you took Tiny," I answered. I am ashamed now when I think how saucy and unkind I used to talk, for Mrs. Dunn did really take as much care of Tiny as if she had been her own, although, of course, that wasn't much.

"Just clear out of my house, you good-for-nothing," she said, angrily, boxing my ears.

"Now, see here, Mrs. Dunn," said I, raising my fist, "I can right easy knock you down, but it's no use having a row. If you're going to treat me so I'll do it; but if you'll act like a decent woman, I'll treat you civil. I'm tired, and I ain't going on no errand for five cents, but I'll stay here and take care of Tiny, and fetch you a pail of water, and have your tea ready when you get back." When Mrs. Dunn found I wouldn't do the one thing, she made me do the next best thing she could; and so

putting on her hood she went off with the clothes. I brought in for her two pails of water. I tidied up the room. I set the tea-table, and put the kettle on to boil. Then I took up Tiny, and telling her I was going to take a walk, I went out in the street. Near the door I met the woman who lived in the upper part of the house, and I told her that I was just "taking out Tiny for a walk," so that when Mrs. Dunn should come home she might think I would soon return with the child.

I brought Tiny to our room and placed her on the straw beside Birdie. Birdie was enraptured to have the child back, but the feeling was in no way returned by Tiny. She, of course, had long since forgotten Birdie, and she was frightened by being caught up and hugged and kissed, and so she began to cry, and tried to get away from Birdie. She, too, had had a hard life, and she was not very strong and hardy. She never played and jumped about like healthy children, but

would sit still with her thumb in her mouth by the hour; so that when Birdie cried over her and kissed her, the child was uncomfortable and worried. Then, too, poor as was the room of Mrs. Dunn, it was handsome compared to our miserable attic; and Tiny, not having the fire to which she was accustomed, and the warm drink for her supper, and seeing everything new and strange and dark and chilly, began to cry, and could not be pacified. She would neither eat or drink. I was frightened lest her cries should bring up Biddy O'Flaherty; and when I mentioned this to Birdie, she became terrified, as she always did, at an allusion to any one coming up to our room. Birdie now began to threaten the child and shake her to make her quiet, and to slap her, but this had only the contrary effect; for however Mrs. Dunn might have been obliged to leave the child and unwillingly to neglect her, she had never really shown her any positive unkindness, and had never treated her with any severity. Tiny had not been

an hour in the house before I heartily repented of having stolen her away, for I felt that, although she might not receive all the care she needed at the hands of Mrs. Dunn, neither had she ever been treated with the harshness she now received at the hands of Birdie. It was only when, from sheer weariness, she fell asleep, and she sobbed even in her sleep, that we had any quiet.

The excitement brought fever on Birdie. She had not on either night been as ill as she was now, and in the morning her fever seemed to increase instead of subsiding, as heretofore it had done. It really seemed to me as if she must die. I knew not what to do. I was ashamed to go to Pat Molloy after what had taken place ; still more ashamed to go to Miss Gibson. I think that Tiny must have been accustomed to sleep until very late in the day, for she showed no signs of waking up, or I should have carried her back to Mrs. Dunn. The heat was so great in Birdie's head, that at times it seemed as if she would have con-

vulsions. There was no way left ; it seemed to me that I must go to Pat Molloy again for advice. Pat understood my way of life ; he knew what Biddy O'Flaherty was ; he had himself led the same kind of life I was now leading, so I did not feel the mortification in telling him the whole state of the case that I should have felt in telling Miss Gibson. That's the trouble always in poor folks like me coming to rich ladies and gentlemen. They don't understand them ; they don't make allowance enough, and so poor folks hide their faults with lies, and then they get found out, and then rich folks cast them off. I just made a clean breast of it, and told Pat the whole story. It was wonderful how changed Pat was. He had got to talk so much like Miss Gibson. The change reminded me of a bunch of flowers she once had in her hand when I went to see her. After she had gone out of the room, quite up stairs, I could smell the scent the flowers had left in the room. So in this place where

she had been, though she was far away, yet I could notice the effect of her presence. I could tell she had been there by the change in Pat. He told me he was sorry, very sorry, for what had happened, and advised me to tell the whole truth to Miss Gibson ; but this I declared very positively that I wouldn't do. He thought awhile, and then he said, "If your sister is so very sick, perhaps Miss Gibson ought not to go in her room. Suppose, without any explanation, I just let her know to-day (she said she would be in to-day) ; I will let her know that Birdie is very ill with fever, and ask what you must do ?" I agreed to this, but made him promise that he would tell Miss Gibson nothing more. So I left and ran home. I found Tiny awake, but the fever made Birdie unconscious of her presence ; indeed, poor Birdie took no notice of me or anything else. So I took Tiny up in my arms and carried her back to Mrs. Dunn, making up, as I went along, the flat lie that I went out to take a little walk with her, and

she got asleep in my arms, and so I had to keep her all night, because I must get the evening papers, and so had no time to bring her back before. Of course Mrs. Dunn doubted my story, but she said nothing; so I left the child, glad to get rid of her, and determining, in my own mind, never to speak ugly to Mrs. Dunn again, for if she should offer to give up Tiny to me, what should I do!

CHAPTER X.

THE next morning, as I sat watching beside Birdie, wondering what I should do for her, as she still continued very ill, I heard steps coming up the stairs, and some one knocked at the door. Birdie, as she always did when any one approached the door, showed signs of great terror, and although too weak to reach out and hold me, as she had done before, yet piteously begged me to lock the door and keep every one out. Before I had determined what to do, the door was opened, and an elderly gentleman came in. Birdie drew up the dirty bed-cover over her face, and began to scream and swear. The gentleman stood just within the door a moment and looked around the room, as if to study the appearance of everything in the room. Then he came up to me, and,

looking me straight in the eyes, asked, "What is your name?" At first I felt like telling him to mind his own business and clear out; but there was something in his eye, I cannot tell what, that prevented me from being saucy, so I quietly answered, "Jack, sir." "Who is this?" pointing to the bed. "Birdie, sir," I said. "Who is Birdie?" he continued. "My sister, sir," I replied, and she began to scream more violently than before. "What is the matter with her?" he asked, getting out his spectacles and deliberately putting them on, then going to the bed. He drew the cover from her hands, and very quietly, but very firmly, held it down so that he could see her face. At this Birdie was more violent than I had ever seen her before. She called him all the vilest names that could be thought of. He did not notice it any more than if she had not spoken, but he turned to me and beckoned me to him. "Jack," said he, in a kind tone, "I am Dr. Gibson. My daughter has spoken to me

about you. She wanted to come herself and see your sick sister, but I would not let her until I had called to see if this child had any contagious fever. Now I think you can trust her to my skill, my boy, can't you?" I scarcely know what I said, only I know that I felt very thankful, and wanted just to fall down right at his feet and tell him so. He tried to get hold of Birdie's wrist to feel her pulse, and to have her open her mouth to see her tongue; but she actually spit at him, and the words that came from her lips made me blush for her. "Oh, sir," I cried, "she wasn't so when poor mother lived; she was a good and kind and dear little girl. I don't know what has come over her; indeed, I don't." "Can you tell me anything about the people she has been with? I think she has been unkindly treated, Jack, and that she is broken down from the effect of cold and hunger and neglect and ill-usage. I think it is a case for my daughter more than for me. She can do more for her than I can, Jack."

Here the old gentleman took off his spectacles and put them in the case, and then in his pocket. He leaned his head on his hand and looked sadly for a long time at Birdie. She had been swearing at him, but somehow as he sat on the soap-box looking at her, she became silent. "My poor little one!" he said to her, "we will give you some nice things to eat and drink, and try to build you up and make you well; and then, maybe, some day you'll be glad to have the old doctor come and see you. Most of my little folks are glad when they hear me come. Won't you be one of my nice little folks, eh?" I trembled least she should begin to swear again; but she fixed her great brown eyes on him and said nothing. Before he went away he gave me some powders to give her every hour. Then, looking round the room, he hesitated. I knew he was undecided as to whether I would know the time, so I said, "I can tell by the striking of the church clock, sir. There's one in the street above, sir. I can hear it plain, and I always

go by it." All right, Jack; I see you are a quick-witted fellow," he said. "How do you manage to live here?" He looked around the room, as if he didn't see much to make life very comfortable.

"Ah, sir," said I, "it's better than the street. I *have* lived in the street for months at a time. I do pretty well; if I can only manage to get Birdie strong again, I think all will be right."

The old gentleman spoke some words of encouragement, patted me on the head, and said that some time he would call again. Then, as he was putting his handkerchief in his overcoat pocket, he pretended to come suddenly upon a large Havana orange. He rolled it across the floor towards Birdie's bed, and then went off as briskly as if he were a boy.

The next day Birdie was more quiet, and seemed better after taking the medicine that Dr. Gibson had left for her, and I went about my work feeling much happier. I met Biddy O'Flaherty on the first platform of the stairs:

She was so much under the influence of liquor that she could get neither up or down.

"O, for the love of the Vargin, help me, Jack!" she cried. "No, I won't," said I. "You kept all my things; you're bad to me. I'll never help you, the longest day you live!" "Och, it's mad ye are! He! he! he! Didn't I kape the nice things? How's all yer fambly, Jock; all the childer? He! he! Ye won't help yer ould Aunt Biddy, bad luck to yee!"

"You aggravating, old, drunken thing, get out of my way," said I, getting very angry. Let me get past." "Och, by me sowl, yer ne'er perlite; but, for all that, ye dinna swear like the swearin' I hearn in yer garret tother night," and she turned up her face towards me with a hideous drunken leer. "Sure, and ye'll tell me what's the racket I hears fornenst yon door from time to time. Some aggravatin' old drunken vagabond, eh?" I snatched the old black hood from her head and threw it up stairs, and then the next

minute I felt ashamed of myself for showing such petty spite towards a miserable old woman. Her gray hair fell in uncombed, matted locks down her shoulders, and she struck at me, with her naked scrawny arm, a feeble, helpless sort of blow. "Go fetch me hood, ye young rascal! Have ye no grace to trait a puir old woman, and—and—*she yer aunt*, in such a way?" I had been looking up to see where I had flung the hood, but my quick ear, caught a change in the old woman's tone, even before she hesitated and added the last few words to her sentence, and looking down I saw the cause of the change at the foot of the staircase.

There stood Miss Gibson. How long she had been there, I could not tell. I felt guilty, and doubtless looked so. No feelings of the kind disturbed Biddy. "Here's the purty young leddy; the worse fur yees, Jack, that she should hear ye abusin' yer puir old aunt in sich a way."

Neither Miss Gibson or myself said a word.

She waited a moment, then called some one from the carriage, and a man came up the staircase with her. When he came to the platform, he and I both took hold of Biddy, and helped her into the room which I pointed out as hers; then closing the door, I went up to my garret corner, followed by Miss Gibson.

Birdie heard the noise on the staircase, and locked the door with the padlock. "Let me in, Birdie; it's Jack!" I said. The wily creature kept perfectly quiet. I wondered that Miss Gibson had any patience with us. I wondered that she did not go right off and leave us. Then I remembered her reading to me a verse about the "long-suffering of Christ," and about His mercy and patience and forgiveness, and I concluded that she must have learned these things from her "dear Jesus;" and I began to see how beautiful they were in her, and therefore how beautiful the "dear Jesus" must be. Thoughts go very quickly through our minds. These thoughts all passed through my mind

in the little while that I stood, net knowing what to do, before the locked door; but I am better at acting than thinking, so I bestirred myself as to how I should get in. The man had come up stairs with us, so I knew Birdie must have heard his footsteps; but the lady had tripped so lightly on the steps that I reckoned she could not have been heard. So I called out, "Here is good Dr. Gibson again, and he has brought you another great big orange!" Miss Gibson did not look pleased, but Birdie waited a moment, and then opened the door just far enough to peep through; but the moment it was thus far open, I had no difficulty in forcing it wide open. When the child saw that she had been deceived, she began to swear and to scream, and Miss Gibson looked so worried that I feared she would go right away. "O, please, Miss, don't mind her. I don't know what you think of us. I am ashamed, indeed I am."

"So am I, Jack," she said. "I am ashamed

that anything should lead you to act as you have done to that poor old woman on the stairs, your aunt, and that you should deceive your sister by forcing your way in with a lie!"

"She's not my aunt, ma'am!" I indignantly exclaimed. "Well, she's a poor old woman. Never treat an old person unkindly, Jack, no matter what they do."

Birdie, with strange contrariness, always took my part when she thought any one else scolded me. So now, thinking that Miss Gibson was finding fault with me, instantly stopped screaming, and said, "Jack's always good to me. I always want him in. It is *you* I want to keep out."

"When you know me better, I don't think you'll want to keep me out either. I am Jack's friend. Won't you let me come to see you as poor Jack's friend? My father says you have been very sick, my little one. Yes, see how thin these poor little arms are; come, sit on the bed, and I will sit on the soap-box, and let us look in this basket; perhaps we could

find something in here that you could eat." She took off her bonnet, and Birdie looked wonderingly at her beautiful hair and the bright colors in her shawl, and her pin and earrings. She stood beside her and scanned her from head to toe, and then she gave a sigh as if of relief. I am sure I don't know why. Miss Gibson pretended to be overlooking the basket, and did not notice the dirty, thin little figure before her, with the great brown eyes taking in eagerly everything she wore. At last Miss Gibson brought out a bunch of grapes. The dirty little hands of Birdie were quickly stretched out to grasp them. "Wait a moment," said the lady. "Let me see, you have no table. Well, we will take the soap-box for our table, and here is a napkin in the basket; this shall be our table-cloth." She spread the white napkin over the dirty box; on this she laid a beautiful bunch of grapes, a glass of jelly, some apples, and a piece of sponge-cake. Then from the bottom of the basket she drew a loaf of white bread, some

butter, some hard-boiled eggs, and a cup of beef tea. All this placed upon the white napkin, made both Birdie's eyes and mine to shine, and we both began to laugh, at which Miss Gibson laughed too. "Wait a moment," she said," as Birdie stretched out her hand to reach the tempting grapes; "I want to say something first. I am very sorry, Birdie, that Jack should have cheated you into thinking that you were to have a big orange, before we came in. Now I want to tell you one thing. I will never cheat you, Birdie; neither, I hope, will I ever tell you a lie. I want you to believe me always. Other people have deceived you; you must feel that *I* will never deceive you, cheat you, or tell you a lie. Always believe what I say. All the while you are eating these things, keep thinking to yourself, 'Miss Gibson is my friend; she will always tell me the truth.' Now one moment more. It is from God that we receive every good gift, and I like to thank Him as we take them. Now both of you fold your hands just

so." Then she made a short prayer, of which I don't believe Birdie heard one word, for she was all the time looking at the table, and I was watching her lest she should snatch at something. Yet, strange to say, this prayer made such an impression on her, that afterwards she would never eat anything without first folding her hands, although she never said a word, and I don't think ever thought of anything other than that.

We ate very heartily; for, except the beef tea, Miss Gibson said I should share equally with Birdie. After we got through, she talked very pleasantly with us; and Birdie, who seemed quietly fascinated with her, kept standing directly in front of her, looking at her with those wide-open brown eyes in a way that worried me, lest it should displease Miss Gibson; but I dared not speak, for fear Birdie should get angry and begin to swear.

After a while Miss Gibson began to sing—
it was a simple child's hymn—

"Jesus loves me ; this I know,
For the Bible tells me so," etc

Her voice was very sweet. Birdie was touched by it. "I can sing, too," she said ; "shall I sing for you ?" "Do, please," said Miss Gibson. Birdie began a song something about a gay young man, and then she sang of some lovely Louisa, whose heart had been broken, etc. Birdie had the sweetest voice to sing I ever heard. There was something in it, even while she was a little child, that used to affect my mother to tears. And now, as this poor little dirty creature stood before the refined and beautiful woman, and threw all the pathos of her own suffering into these miserable street ditties, Miss Gibson began to cry. The child cried too, affected probably by the sight of tears in another, but she did not stop singing. The verses were endless, and she sang on, the tears rolling down her unwashed face, making it look more streaked and grimy than ever ; but the sweet childish voice, echoing strongly through the desolate

garret, never faltered until she came to the end of the song. In spite of the dirt, Miss Gibson drew the child for a moment to her, and put her arms around her. "Will you come with me some day to my home and sing for my father, Birdie?" she asked. "I will give you a nice clean dress to come in and a pair of shoes." Then the ugly expression came on the child's face again. "No, I won't," she said, angrily; although I stood behind Miss Gibson making signs for her not to speak so, she would not heed me. "No, I won't. You will promise me fine dresses and rings and lockets, and then when I go you will lock me up, and never let me out until I am almost dead with hunger, and then you will put a tambourine in my hands, and make me sing for bread. You will freeze me and starve me and beat me. Oho! I've learned your ways at last. No, no. I will never leave this place again until you carry me out dead. Don't talk to me about trinkets and jewels. You know about the woman

that made me run away for the promise of such fine things, and I never got them—only was beat and starved." Then she began to swear, but just as suddenly stopped. She had caught the sad expression on Miss Gibson's face, and it conquered her; for, poor thing, she wasn't hardened, so she began to cry and moan quietly. "Birdie," said Miss Gibson, "did I not tell you that you might believe me always. Just try me. I will never deceive you. Besides, I did not promise you trinkets. I said I would give you a clean dress and shoes. Trust me once. See, I am going to trust you." She took from her pocket a little locket. It was made, I think, of silver, lined with gold, and held something that smelled sweet and pleasant. "Here, Birdie," she said, putting it in the child's hand, "to prove that I trust *you*, I am going to leave this with you until I come again, and I have the faith to believe that you are an honest little girl, and that when I come again you will hand it back to me. I hope that

when you give it back to me, you will, at the same time, tell me that you can trust me. I can do nothing for you until I feel that you are willing to trust me."

She then bid us good-bye. The man who had been waiting for her on the stairs went ahead to open the carriage door, and I held Birdie up to the window that she might see the carriage drive off.

CHAPTER XI.

THAT night I went to see Pat Molloy after I had sold my papers. My money was getting very low. I could see very plainly that I could not support both my sister and myself. There was no fire, and no means of making any, in our little room, and winter was coming on fast. I felt quite a weight of care on my mind since I had had Birdie. I had known poverty and want, but then I did not mind it for myself; it was for Birdie that I dreaded the coming winter. All this I told to Pat. He was seated in a rocking-chair before a little stove, and his room, although very plain, was neat and cheerful; to me, at that time, it looked almost like a palace. Pat, as I have said before, was changed very much for the better. I could tell him all my troubles now, and ask his advice almost as if he had

been an older brother. He said that perhaps Mrs. Brown, the woman who took care of him, would let me hire an attic-room she had, which was not used, for the same rent that I now paid ; and, if so, Birdie could sit in her kitchen by the fire all day. Then that I could buy bread and milk and such things for her to eat which would not need cooking, and I could live as I did last winter, only coming home there instead of to the room I now had. "But," said he, "Jack, you must ask Miss Gibson first, for I would not like you even to ask Mrs. Brown until Miss Gibson felt it would be for the best." "Oh," said I, "I might make her think that Mrs. Brown had offered me the room first, and I had accepted the offer."

"Jack, that would not be true," said he. "Never deceive her. She has taught me how much better it is to deal straightforward with people, than to get along by cheating and lying and deceiving. I used to think just as you do now, that when I could "come it"

over people, I was doing a smart thing; but, Jack, it is a mean way. When Miss Gibson tells me a thing I believe it; for I know she does not tell a lie; and oh, believe me, lad, it's a nice way to get along. If every one told the truth, what a pleasant world it would be! Let us at least do our share of the right. Did you get along any better the time you and Biddy and all of you tried to deceive Miss Gibson?" I was compelled to own that I did not. "Has the padlock you stole been any great comfort to you?" On the contrary, I had wished it back many a time. "I'll tell you, Jack, and mind my words, for poor Pat won't be very long left to you, mind my words, be honest and truthful; don't cheat and lie and steal. It makes you braver and bolder to be able to look every one in the face, than to go sneaking and cheating like a liar and scoundrel. It's better even in this world; but how much better it will be for you in the next world!"

"Why, Pat, this is something new for you, isn't it, old fellow, to feel this way?"

"Yes, Jack, it is; but the more I think over lying, and swearing, and stealing, and cheating, the worse they seem; and the more I think over how Jesus loves us and wants us to be good, the better such things seem. I'm sorry I was so bad, and used to teach you and the other boys so much mischief. I'm asking God every day to help me to be good."

I felt as much surprised as if I had seen Pat stand up in the pulpit and preach. I knew he was changed, but I had an idea it was because he was sick, and couldn't very well domineer over me as he used to, and I thought it was because he wanted to please Miss Gibson, who had made him so comfortable, that he tried to appear well. I was surprised, indeed, to find that he really wanted to be good, and that he hated sin, for its own sake. Thinks I—Jack, are you so bad as to be lying and cheating, when other folks are trying to be good?

Pat sat still a while to let me think over what he said, and then he turned to me again. "My boy," said he—Pat often used to call me so when he was in a good humor as we were pitching pennies in the street—"my boy, you know I can't do much for folks any more, but as Miss Gibson says, it is pleasant to do what we can for others. If you want me, I will speak to her about your hiring Mrs. Brown's room, and if she thinks best, I will also speak to Mrs. Brown." I felt thankful to Pat, and really felt quite cheerful as I left him, for his eyes looked so very bright, even if he was thin and pale, and I kept feeling all the time that he would get well, and we should all have a pleasant time together.

A few days after this, Miss Gibson came again to our room. I had just got in from my morning's work.

"I am glad to see you, Jack," she said, "for I have a little matter of business which I wish to talk to you both about. Birdie, I want your opinion as well as Jack's." This seemed to

please Birdie ; she looked very sober and attentive, and as if she felt pleased that her opinion was of any importance. She had not padlocked the door when she heard Miss Gibson's step on the stairs, and though she would not at first look up or speak, yet she gradually drew near Miss Gibson, and at last stood directly in front of her, with eyes fixed intently upon her as before. I asked Birdie to stand back a little, but she motioned me impatiently away, and I was afraid to insist upon it lest, in her irritation, she should use bad words again ; so now she stood, with her hands folded behind her, right in front of Miss Gibson, as if she meant to take in every look and every word.

" Now I want you both to listen to a plan I have thought of. You need not give me an answer to-day ; think over it and talk over it together. Remember, Birdie, I never deceive you ; I never cheat you or tell you a lie. If you do not want to take my plan, you need not do it. Did I not trust *you*, Birdie ? "

The child ran to a corner of the bed, and out from the straw she pulled the locket, and handed it back to the lady, as much as to say, Yes, there is the pledge. Miss Gibson received it as such. "Now, will you trust me?" The child nodded her head.

"My plan," continued Miss Gibson, "is this: There is a vacant room in the attic of Mrs. Brown's house. It is divided by a partition; there could be placed a bed each side of the partition—on the one side a little bed for you, Birdie; on the other side, one for Jack. Birdie could eat at the table with Mrs. Brown, and you could both find a place at her fire. You would both be more comfortable than you are now, and Birdie would feel safer, for there would always be some one in the house with her."

"Oh, how nice that would be, Miss Gibson; that would be just what I wanted!" said I; "wouldn't it be nice, Birdie?" She said not a word.

"I do not want you to give me an answer

now," Miss Gibson continued, "because, if you conclude to accept of the arrangement, there is one thing Mrs. Brown requires of you, and she will not take you in her house without it. She is a very clean, tidy woman. She will not have you in her rooms unless you are perfectly clean. To make you so, she desires that you both take a bath, and put on entirely new clothes. The charitable society of our church will provide a nice suit and under-clothes for you, Jack, and I will provide the same for Birdie."

"I should like to be clean, Miss Gibson," said I; "but I don't want charity."

"I will tell you how you can manage that, Jack: accept the nice new clothing, and make a present from time to time out of your earnings to the society. That will show your gratitude. It is a mean thing to accept of favors, and never show gratitude in return. I do not believe Mrs. Brown will take you in her clean room unless you promise that. I will tell you where to go for your bath, and

I would be willing to take Birdie myself. Here is a parcel containing clothes for Birdie if she wishes to go. Of course if she wishes to remain here, her old clothes will answer." I felt almost beside myself with joy at the way Miss Gibson had laid the matter before Birdie; for I knew that if I had asked her plainly, she would have refused, but I knew the effect upon her the sight of the new clothes would have. Miss Gibson carefully untied the parcel which the servant had carried in. There was a pretty red calico dress and a brown one, two white aprons, two dark ones, under-clothing, plaid, woolen stockings, a quilted sack, and a bright worsted hood. There were also four little pocket-handkerchiefs and a bright red ribbon to tie up her hair.

Birdie gazed upon these treasures with eyes open to their greatest size. She never, for a second, turned from the contents of the parcel. She really seemed transfixed at the thought of those treasures ever being hers. After she

had examined them all thoroughly, Miss Gibson very deliberately folded them all up again, tied the parcel as it was before, and bid the man carry them down to the carriage. Birdie said not one word. Then Miss Gibson took from her satchel a large orange, and said to Birdie, "Here, little one; I brought this orange so as to try and make Jack's promise good. You know he said that you were to have a large orange. I am afraid he deceived you. Now take this as representing the one you then expected to have."

I thanked Miss Gibson over and over again, and told her how glad I would be to accept her offer; but she insisted in not receiving any answer until we should have talked the matter over together.

CHAPTER XII.

A WEEK from that very day beheld Birdie and myself, in our new clothes, going in to take possession of our new room. Birdie had a nice little bed, and a clean white coverlid on it. She had a bedstead, mind you; we each had one. There was a low chair beside her bed, and the same beside mine. She had a little chest of drawers with a glass on it. A wash-stand and a little low bench with a china-faced doll on it, stood in one corner. I also had a wash-stand in my room; think of that! I had never had a wash-stand before. There were pegs to hang my clothes on, and a low table with a drawer in it which could lock, for me to keep my earnings in! I never saw anything so beautiful in my life! I could hardly believe my eyes. I had slept for years on a bunch of

straw, with an old dirty quilted coverlid and a torn sheet! Here was a real bedstead, nice white sheets, a new gay calico quilt, and all for me! I had washed at the street pump. Now I was to have a basin on a real wash-stand, and a clean towel hung beside it. Instead of the old soap-box, here was a nice chair, which I could place before my little table, and then pull open my drawer, and take out my money and count it over on my table! Could you believe it possible! I don't think there was ever made such beautiful furniture as there was in that room! All the furniture I have since seen was as nothing compared with it! Birdie and I were really to have things like other people. "Birdie, my lass, you're a queen!" said I; "let me kiss you," and I sat down on her little chair, and then on mine, to try which was most comfortable; and I placed my chair before the window, and sat on it to look out of the window, and then before the table to see if it was the right height. I wished it was night, that

I might try the bed. I rubbed my face with the clean towel just to notice how it felt, for I had really been scrubbed so clean in the bath, that my cheeks were polished. Birdie's cup was the only thing we had brought with us; it was placed on her chest of drawers beside the glass. "Oh, do you think there was ever such a beautiful place?" said I, again catching up Birdie and kissing her. Her bed had a white coverlid on it—snow white—think of that! The two little rooms were divided by a partition, and there was a door opening from one to the other, and a door from each into the hall. As I happened to look up, there in the hall stood Miss Gibson. She had been looking at me all the time. I stopped suddenly, and then she laughed. She did look so happy, and I felt so happy, that I think we understood each other. I am sure no words could have expressed what I felt towards her for all her kindness. Birdie didn't say a word, but there was a strange calmness in her face such as I hadn't seen

since I had found her again. There was a quietness about her which reminded me of old times. She was now more like mother. Mother was never a noisy woman. I don't like noisy women. "Miss Gibson," I said, "how can I ever thank you enough for this plan? Birdie, come here; thank this good lady." "Wouldn't it be well, children, to thank our Father in heaven?" she said, and she closed the door and took one on one side of her and one on the other, and we knelt down beside the bed, and she made a prayer. What do you think she said? Why, she thanked our Father in heaven for giving us those things. She thanked Him for giving us to her to love, and for allowing her to help us. She asked God to make us love Him, and to make us good, and many things like that. It seemed so strange, that I could not help asking her, when we got up, why we should thank God when it was *she* gave us these things. Miss Gibson said that it was *God* who put it in her heart; that the gift came

from Him through her. She said it was a great privilege to be allowed to work for God, and with God. "Co-workers with Him," so she expressed it. "Do you think," I said, "that God would let *me* work for Him? What could I do for Him?" She said that the least thing done in a kind spirit to any one, for Christ's sake, He considers as done to Him. "You do a great deal for the 'dear Jesus,' don't you?" I said. "No, Jack; not half as much as I want to do. I want to give all my time, all my talents, all my work, all my love, entirely to Him, doing everything just as well as I can do it, just for His sake."

"Have you been so kind to us for His sake?" I asked.

"Yes," she said, "for His sake. He told me to be kind to you. He tells me to be kind to all."

"But you have plenty of money to do good with. Could *I* do good?"

"Certainly you could, Jack. Every little act of kindness that you do to any one, if you

do it because you want to please Him, He accepts just as if done to Himself.”

I couldn’t quite understand it yet.

“ Well, Jack, try to do good for Jesus’ sake, and then all I said will be made plain to you. Begin with giving your own heart to God as the first gift, and then keep on doing good.”

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER this, everything went on comfortably for us in our new home. We began both of us to try and do as well as we could. I resolved to leave off lying and stealing and cheating, and to do everything that I thought would please — I wanted to say Jesus, but when I examined into my own heart, I could see that it was Miss Gibson I wanted to please. But I was beginning more and more to love Jesus, and I felt that I should soon be able to say for Jesus' sake.

Dr. Gibson got a place for me. He said that he thought he could place me where I would make more than by selling papers. I told him that I would be obliged to him, and would do anything he thought best; but at the same time that I could never go in a dry-goods store and be a cash-boy; such namby-

pamby work would take all the spirit out of me. He said that the place he had in view was in the Iron Works. Ah, that was just the thing, so I left off selling papers, and entered my new place at once. Birdie was very comfortable. She used to keep her room and mine in excellent order. She helped Mrs. Brown, and worked very cheerfully with her all day. When all the house work was finished, Mrs. Brown would teach her to sew and darn and mend. Sometimes she would play with her doll in Pat Molloy's room, or sit beside Pat and have him tell her stories. Pat's influence over her was very good, for he talked to her just as Miss Gibson talked to him, and as fast as he discovered a new truth he imparted it to her. I sometimes think that we can learn more from a mind that is not so far above us, for those who know so much cannot take the measure of our ignorance or of our wisdom. Some things they do not make plain enough, and others they confuse by over-explaining. Pat could judge from

his own case just where her deficiency lay, and he took great delight in teaching her, for it was the only way open to him in which he might do good. Miss Gibson says that every real Christian wants to work for Christ, and is not satisfied unless there is some way in which he can do so. Pat felt it to be a pleasant duty to teach Birdie all that he knew. She, in return, could do much for him; and she relieved Mrs. Brown very much by waiting and tending on Pat. Mrs. Brown, besides teaching her household work and sewing, began to teach her to read. This was a real pleasure to the child, for she was so anxious to learn. After I got accustomed to my new place, I felt ashamed that I could not read myself; so at Dr. Gibson's suggestion I went to night school. I did not find learning to read half as hard as I thought it would be. We both went to Sunday-school now, and we took turns to go with Mrs. Brown to church, one of us always remaining at home with Pat. We were thus, as you can see, a

very happy family. I do not think there was ever a single word of fault-finding among us. Every one of us respected the feelings of the others. We all began to love one another. Mrs. Brown became very fond of us children. She was a sweet-tempered, good, Christian woman, and we began to love her, and at her own suggestion, to call her Aunt Anne. Thus love governed our household, and was the law there, and we were not slow in noticing its sweet refining influence. We used to rise early, so that I could get my breakfast and be at my work in time; but no matter how early we were obliged to rise, Aunt Anne always had prayers before breakfast, and this family worship was held in Pat's room, because he was not strong enough to sit up all day, and therefore did not rise until eleven o'clock. Mrs. Brown was very neat, and taught Birdie to be so; and Birdie soon began to go singing about her work in a way that showed how happy she was. Her frightened, terror-stricken look left her entirely;

and although she had a sad expression for one of her age, there came a sweet, reposeful look in her face which made her very winning. Miss Gibson first called my attention to it. She said it was very touching. It would be utterly impossible for me to tell the effect of the influence of Miss Gibson upon Birdie. The one was the beautiful, rich, gifted Christian woman; the other the poor, ignorant, outcast child of the street. Looking back, I understand it now better than I did then; but at that time it was to me a perpetual wonder that Miss Gibson should read Birdie's heart and mind so easily, and still more that Birdie should so readily comprehend Miss Gibson. It seemed to me at times as if they could read each other's thoughts, for often a mere hint from Miss Gibson was enough for Birdie.

I do not mean that all this change of which I have been speaking both in Birdie and myself was sudden. On the contrary, we were almost two months with Aunt Anne before there was any change perceptible; but it was

as when the sun begins to turn back from his winter's path; slowly and surely the signs of coming spring appear, until, at last, birds and grass, buds and flowers, warm air and pleasant sunshine have come imperceptibly, but surely, and you find the summer in all its loveliness is with you.

CHAPTER XIV.

AS soon as Birdie had got well and strong enough to go out, Miss Gibson had told me that I must bring her to Sunday-school; and I must tell you about the first time. Aunt Anne had washed her dress and pretty little apron, and had bought her a hat, which I thought made her look very sweet, because it had a bright ribbon on it.

I was wonderfully impatient on that Sunday, and wanted to have Birdie put on her new things right away; but Aunt Anne said No, lest she should soil them before it was time to go. She said that Birdie must be taught to keep her clothes very neat and nice. It shows a very ungrateful temper to spoil things immediately that have been given to you. That is what she said, and I think it is true. I often wonder that ladies do not

get discouraged in fitting out poor children for Sunday-school; these children are so careless with the things which are given them. I was glad that Aunt Anne was going to teach my Birdie to be neat and tidy, only I felt anxious to see her dressed up like other children, and it seemed as if the morning was longer than usual. When at last Birdie came into my room all dressed, I was very proud of her, and made her turn round two or three times in the middle of the room, that I might see just how nice she looked. Then Aunt Anne got a primer out of the drawer and folded Birdie's handkerchief around it, and kissed her, and put her hand in mine, and we walked off as happy, nay, perhaps, happier, than if we had been the richest children in the city. Birdie skipped along, and a bright color came in her cheeks, and I held her hand tightly lest she should get lost. I had my Bible under my arm, and I felt very proud of having a little sister to go with me. We had a long walk to take, and Birdie, who

was always a timid child, but is more so than ever since the frightened life she led under the old harper, soon left off skipping, and clung more closely to me as we approached the larger thoroughfares. When we entered the school-room I took her into the seat with me. Miss Gibson had not come. A tall fellow named Tom began to quiz me about having a girl with me. I took no notice of him, and then he began to tease Birdie, pulling the string of her hat, and trying to hide away her handkerchief. What with the large room, so strange and unlike anything she had ever seen, and the crowds of new faces, and then this thoughtless fellow teasing her, Birdie became very much frightened, and began to cry out loud. I tried in every kind way to hush her up. I promised her candy, and tried every coaxing art, but all in vain. I took her on my knee, and untied her hat, and laid it beside me on the seat. Her face was all red, and some of the other boys joined Tom in making fun of me and calling me a

nurse, but I felt so worried about Birdie that I paid no attention to them. Presently I saw Miss Gibson standing near the library. Then I thought she would come and help me, and I wondered very much that she did not. I began to think she was ashamed of Birdie, and that made me feel angry, for I said to myself, "If you only knew all the poor little thing had had to bear long ago, you would not wonder that she gets so easily frightened." After a while Miss Gibson came and brought with her from the library a bright picture card. When I saw that she had all the while been looking for that, then I felt that I had been unjust to her. Birdie is fond of pictures, and Miss Gibson took her on her lap and talked to her about the picture, and showed her the infant Saviour and His mother, and the cattle beside the manger, until she forgot her fears, and began herself to talk to Miss Gibson, and to look pleased, with only a sob now and then, and her red face to show of her previous fears. Miss Gibson smoothed down

her hair very gently, and brushed back the curls, and then tied on her hat, and placed her on the seat close beside herself, where Birdie sat intently looking at the picture in her hand, until the heat of the room and the quiet hum of the children's voices made her feel drowsy, and she fell asleep, with her head on Miss Gibson's arm. I was afraid our dear teacher might not like to have the little curly head on her nice dress, and I offered to waken her up, but she said, "Never mind, Jack; don't wake her. Poor little thing, she is sleeping so quietly!"

Our lesson that day was on God's care over us; and Miss Gibson explained how God watches over us all the time, and knows all we do and say, and how He feels for us. He pities us as none other can. After explaining it to us, she told us that we should also love and pity each other; that tenderness was a feeling attributed to God; and yet we boys were often ashamed of it. She then turned to me and said, "Jack, I was so pleased to see

the tenderness and pity with which you tried to pacify your little sister, and I was also ashamed that some of my other boys tried to laugh at you. Boys, all of you remember, that to be pitiful and tender and patient and loving, is to be more like God. To be malicious and cruel and provoking, is to be like Satan. Be careful to cultivate the God-like qualities—to shun those which lead you downward. I saw you through it all, Jack, although you did not see me. I was watching how you would stand the test of temptation."

"Ah, ma'am," said I; "I am not as good as you think me, for when you were at the library I wondered you did not come to my help, for all the school was looking at me; and because you did not come right away, I thought you was ashamed of Birdie, and that made me feel angry."

"Jack," she said, "that is the way we often treat God. He stands watching us in our troubles; He sees just what we are going through; He knows we will be the better for

the trouble, so just at that time He does not come to relieve us, but He sees it all, and knows it, and feels glad when He sees us doing just the right thing ; and when it is the right time for Him to come to our relief, then He comes, and we feel relieved and comforted."

CHAPTER XV.

I SHALL not soon forget the first time I ever attended church. To those who have been in the habit of going every Sunday from their very childhood with their parents, it may seem strange that I should have been so much impressed. Such persons must bear in mind that I never before had entered within a church door. No one had ever described to me anything about the interior of a church, or the method of church service ; no one with whom I had hitherto associated had ever gone to church. Biddy O'Flaherty used to talk sometimes about going to the priest, just as she talked of going to the butcher or baker ; but I never associated her with any ideas of worship, so that to me all that is meant by religion or religious service was vague indeed. The churches which I saw in my newspaper

rounds were no more to me than the banks, the city hall, or any other public place. If any distinction existed in my mind between the two, it only lay in the fact that the one class of buildings was open on Sunday, the other during the week. Few charitable ladies and gentlemen can realize how wide a chasm exists between their own children, who have been instructed from their earliest years in Gospel truths, and us poor children of the street, who grow up without any knowledge of these things. In the one case, they are taught so early that they have no recollection of the impression made upon their minds at the time; in the other, these things come to us as the discoveries which men make when their minds are ripened.

Miss Gibson wanted Birdie and myself to go to church. It was a very natural thing to her, a very new one to us. Aunt Anne could not leave Pat that day, so we were sent off alone, with directions where to go and how to behave, and instructions the chief of which

was that we were to sit very still and not make any noise.

Hand in hand we went, two perhaps as ignorant little ones as ever stood before the house of God. For a few moments we loitered at the entrance to look up with childish wonder at the great stone front and the tall spire, and to listen to the bell as it slowly and solemnly tolled the call to service. Then we entered where a crowd of richly dressed ladies were passing in. Gray-haired old gentlemen, each taking off his glossy beaver, passed within the door; and younger men seemed to loiter a while in the porch, or to lean over and speak to some gay young Miss among his acquaintances. We drifted in with the rest. Inside I stood still a moment, blinded by the sudden transition from the sunlight without to the sombre shade within. Then Birdie and I looked up to the high-arched ceiling with perfect amazement; the tall windows deep set in the walls, the black walnut desk, the velvet cushion, the carvings about the

pulpit; upon each and all we stood gazing in the mute astonishment of an unexplained novelty. No one noticed us, so we went on with the rest. We walked up the middle aisle as did others before us, and all unconsciously we went on until we reached the very last pew—Birdie with her head thrown far back to look up at the ceiling, which had attracted her fancy, and I drawing her slowly after me by the one hand held in mine. When I saw it was possible to go no farther, I drew her into the pew and lifted her up and placed her on the red damask cushion, and took my seat beside her. Seeing the gentlemen without hats, I took off mine, and hesitated if I must do the same for Birdie ; but seeing some little girls (and I could not help contrasting their finery with Birdie's appearance) with their hats on, I smoothed back the curls under her hood without taking it off. Presently a lady and gentleman entered the pew; they looked at us with some surprise, and the gentleman motioned us to move farther in. I did

not think that the lady seemed much pleased to have us there; but I was unconscious of any reason for her feeling so, and we were quite innocent of having done anything unusual in taking the seat. Presently the organ began to play. It had a great effect upon Birdie. She clasped both her little hands tightly together, and seemed to take the music in with every sense. I have noticed since that music affects her more than anything else. I cannot quite understand myself why she should be so much more affected by it than I am; but Miss Gibson understands why, and she says that Birdie has an unusually fine ear for music, and great taste for it. That must be so if Miss Gibson says it; but I cannot yet see how it is that she should be so carried away and excited whenever she hears music. The organ played for a time, and then some people up in the rear gallery sang. I did not like it much, for I couldn't see why first a lady should sing, and then a gentleman, and then they sang together, and

then stopped an instant, and then all together again, and so on until there was a loud crashing sound of organ and voices, and then they were silent and it was done. I looked at Birdie, and she seemed to like it, so I thought it must be all right. Presently an elderly gentleman rose in the pulpit, and said, "Let us ask God's presence and blessing." Then every one put down their heads, and seeing every one else, we did the same; but I couldn't help peeping through my fingers to see if I was doing right. I noticed Birdie did the same, but she kept looking at the minister. He had a pleasant face, but when he began he spoke so low that we could not understand what he was saying. When he got through, he read a hymn, and after the organ played again they sang. This pleased Birdie, as I could see by the calm and satisfied look that came over her face. Then the minister read a chapter, first from the Old Testament and then from the New. He read the story of David and Goliath, and this has been a favor-

ite chapter of mine ever since. Somehow I could understand how David felt when that great fellow came up there and made fun of his brothers and all folks on his side, and dared them to fight. Thinks I, How can he stand that? and then when David agreed to go at the saucy great giant, thinks I, Good for him! I was glad he didn't take the king's armor; I didn't see how he could fight in a brass jacket. When he went to take the little stones from the brook, I got sort of afraid for him, for I could'nt well see how he was going to work. When he spoke about going against the giant in the name of the Lord, thinks I, That's just what Miss Gibson always says, go ahead, trusting in the the Lord; if you put your trust in the Lord, He will help. Thinks I, I'll bet on his side. Sure enough the giant fell dead, killed by a little stone from the sling of the shepherd-boy, and all his army ran away. Ever since I heard that old gentleman read about David—and he read in a very clear, loud voice—I have liked that

chapter, and I like David. When afterwards I came to read the Psalms, I liked David still more, for he says just what I have many a time thought and felt. After this there was more singing and praying, and then came the sermon. Birdie got fast asleep, for the church was very warm, and she wasn't accustomed to sit still so long. I put my arm around her to keep her up, and although at times I felt sleepy myself—for I'm not used to sit still either—still I tried very hard to keep awake, lest Birdie should fall off the seat if I let go of her. There was one part of the sermon which struck me, and that was: he said that all Christians should meet the sins and temptations of life, as David did this giant, in reliance upon God, and with prayer to Him for help. I wondered if the minister meant that all the Christian people who had plenty to eat and drink and fine clothes to wear, had sins and temptations to meet as well as I. I meant to ask God to help me every time I was in trouble, just as David did; but it

seemed to me that no one could have as many sins and temptations as I, and looking around over the people I wondered if these also had had to fight the great giant sin. Then it seemed strange to me that for so many years these good people had been assembling Sunday after Sunday to worship, while I never had; and it seemed strange that they had been praying for me, and I did not know it; for had not I heard the minister pray for the poor, the homeless, the children of want, and those who did not pray for themselves? Truly I was of such; and here the children of God had met and prayed for me! Prayed when I knew nothing about it! I wished and hoped that their prayers might be answered, although I did not know exactly in what way; and in my innermost heart I asked God to help and teach me. Thus, although I did not understand all the sermon, I think I was the better for going to church that day. When the service was over, I followed the crowd out. Aunt Anne had asked me to bring home the

text. I am sure I did not know what she meant, supposing it was something that would be handed me to bring home. Birdie wanted me to wait in the vestibule until the organ ceased playing. We did so, and presently, as all the congregation had left the church by this time, the minister passed us on his way out. He stopped a moment and patted Birdie on the head and asked her name; but she shrunk close to me and did not answer. Then the sexton came blustering about us, and bid us run home, because he wanted to close the church. I did not go there again, for Miss Gibson told us of a little mission church nearer home, and I liked it better than the great large church. Somehow it seemed more natural to me, and more home-like. After this, every Sabbath, Birdie, Aunt Anne, and I, went in turn regularly to the little mission church.

That afternoon, in Sunday-school, I told Miss Gibson that Birdie and I had been to church. She asked me what the text was. I

told her I hadn't seen any text, but if she wanted to know what he talked about I could tell her, if she would excuse me for telling it in my own words. She said, "Well, Jack, let us hear it in your own words." So this is what I told her :

"There was once a great big giant, so tall that he used a beam for a cane to walk with, and there was a rosy-cheeked boy named David, who had come to see the soldiers. His brothers were soldiers on one side, and the great giant was one of the generals on the other side. The giant was very wicked, and swore and used bad words, and he offered to whip anybody that would fight him. David was a plucky little fellow, and he couldn't stand that, so he said he'd fight the giant. The king was somewhere about, and he said he'd do something handsome for the man that would kill the giant; and when he heard that a little fellow named David was going to try, he sent for him to talk the matter over. David wanted to have his own way as to how

he'd attack the giant, so the king let him do as he pleased. Then he went down to the stream and put some stones in a sling, and slung one right up into the giant's forehead, and hit him so hard that the stone went right into his head, and he fell down dead."

Miss Gibson laughed, and said she believed I'd got the story about right. Then she found the chapter, and read it over for us boys, and we talked about it. She asked each one of us what we might learn from the story. Among other things, one of the boys said he thought we could see how that it wasn't size and strength and power that helped us along in the world, but trusting in the Lord, and trying to do what is right. Miss Gibson said that was a very good lesson to learn from it. She said that we had all of us a stronger giant to fight than David had ; the sin in our hearts was harder to conquer than anything else, and we were to fight manfully against it. We promised her to try, and many times since, when I've been tempted to lie or steal

or get angry and say bad words, I say to myself, "There is the great giant again come to fight against you, Jack;" and then I pray softly for help, and try to conquer the sin. If a boy wants to conquer his bad habits, he has got to watch himself; and whenever they seem to get the better of him, he must ask the Lord to help him, and be determined to fight against them—that's the only way. Take my advice, boys, and don't let your sins put *you* down—you put *them* down.

CHAPTER XVI.

THERE were times when Ann Molloy, Pat's sister, gave me much trouble and uneasiness. All that Miss Gibson said or did for her never changed her for the better. She was very sly and underhanded, and given to lying and stealing. She would often tell a long story of how she tried to get work, but could not succeed, and how poor she was. Then when Miss Gibson gave her any money, she would spend it in some improper way. She was once in the House of Correction ; and she was scarcely more than a year free when she was taken up for stealing, and put in the Penitentiary. At times she came to visit Pat, and the excitement caused by her appearance made him much worse. Birdie dreaded her visits. I think she was a perpetual reminder to Birdie of what she might

have been herself had she been left to her own street life; for I remember one day, after a visit from Ann, I found her on her knees crying and praying; and as she rose up she said to me, "Oh, Jack, I once talked just like Ann Molloy, and I am afraid the dear Jesus has not forgotten it; but Pat says if I am very sorry for my sins, Jesus not only pardons them, but forgets them. 'Our sins and our iniquities He will remember no more.' I think those were the words he used. I want Him never to think of my sins any more, or to remember how very wicked I was, for I do feel so badly when I think of my past wickedness. Jack, do you think He will not only forgive but forget them?"

"Would you believe Miss Gibson if she told you she would do a thing?" I asked.

"Yes, of course I would," she answered.

"Then," said I, "why don't you believe what the dear Jesus says?"

"Oh, I try to, Jack, but it seems so wonderful to me that the Lord should forgive all

my sins not only, but forget them, when I was even as wicked as Ann. I wish He would forgive her."

"She will not ask Him," I said. "She does not feel sorry for her sins."

Ann gave me a great deal of trouble, as well as Pat. She saw that I was ashamed of her and of her ways, and that I wanted to have nothing to do with her; so she used to tease and annoy me in every possible way. She got in the way of coming in the yard where I was at work. It was against all rule for any one to do this, but she would manage to glide in slyly when the doors or gates happened to be open. The overseers ordered her out whenever they saw her, and then she would abuse them, and tell them that I was her friend, and that she came in to see me. It was no use that I protested against this, and said that she must not be allowed to come in; the boys would insist on speaking of her as "Jack's friend." This mortified me, for she was not the kind of girl that I wanted

to have known as my friend. She would tell the workmen that I was as bad as she was; that I used to lie and steal and cheat, but that I had "come it," as she expressed it, over a fine lady who got me this place, and now I wanted to act proud and shake off my old friends; but that they better look out, for I was no better than I should be. She used to tell them, also, that I was a canting hypocrite; that I pretended to talk like a parson about wanting to be good, and praying and asking God to forgive my sins; but she thought it would be better to leave off my wicked ways first, and then it would be time enough to pray. So in this way Ann did me a great deal of harm. I did not like to tell Birdie about it, for fear of worrying her; and I would not tell Miss Gibson, for I knew Pat would be sorry to have her know how malicious Ann was; but I often used to talk about this matter with Aunt Anne, and she used to say, "Well, Jack, be so patient and industrious and kind to them all, that they will see

Ann is mistaken in what she says about you." One day Mr. Sampson, the overseer of my part of the shop, came to where I was, to show me how to do some work which was new to me and required some direction. While he was talking, a carman came up to be paid. The overseer took out his pocket-book and paid him, and then rather carelessly laid down the pocket-book on the table. It was a queer little round wallet. I remember thinking he must have brought it with him from the old countries, as he was a Scotchman. Before he got through with me he was called off again in some other direction, and, meantime, I went on with my work. While he was away Ann Molloy came in, and seeing no one near me, she came fearlessly up to where I was working, and sat down. "I wish you would go away, Ann," said I. "Give me twenty-five cents and I'll not trouble yer," she replied.

"I'll not give you a cent; you'd spend it all for liquor."

"Not a drap do I ever take," she said, following the assertion with an oath.

"Do go away, Ann," I said; "there comes Mr. Sampson; you know he'll have you put out." She was determined not to move; and when the overseer came back to me, she was very saucy to him as he ordered her to go out.

"Ye might let me sit abit to rest me beside me friend here," she said.

"She's not my friend, sir," I said, angrily.

"Och," she said, with a knowing wink, which made the blood rush to my face, "ye're yet to learn about Jack. He's a cunning rascal. When ye know him as well as I do, ye'll ne'er trust him as ye do now. Just wait abit. Ye'll soon see."

Mr. Sampson ordered one of the men to put her out, and then finished his instructions to me. As he was about leaving me, he drew from his pocket a great yellow handkerchief, and then his tobacco-box and his spectacle-case, and felt in his several pockets as if in

search of something, and then suddenly recollecting himself, he turned to me and said :

"I believe I was very careless, and left my wallet on your bench, Jack."

I looked on the bench beside me, on the table, on the floor; the pocket-book was nowhere to be seen. As I was leaning down looking among my tools, I began to think of what Ann had said, and I turned very red, for I knew that if the wallet was not found, that I would be suspected as the thief.

Mr. Sampson was a very hot-tempered man; he had red hair; and when he grew angry, his face turned red all the way up to his hair, so that the boys used to say he "was angry, hair and all." There were very valuable papers in the pocket-book, and not very much money; but there were several checks which he intended to draw that very day. The loss of the pocket-book caused a great commotion. Some declared I must have taken it. Others said that the good-for-nothing woman, who had just been put out,

had taken it; but the majority said that she and I were in league together, and that I had given it to her to carry off for me. Mr. Sampson, who was very angry, recalled her last words, and said that I must have been an old companion in sin with this woman, and that I had somewhere secreted the pocket-book. It seemed to me as if there was no one in yard or shop to speak up for me, although I had done many an act of kindness for some of the men. I felt then how unkind human nature, without the grace of God, is; and that when a man stands condemned by the opinion of those around him, how few are willing to stand by him, even though there may be no proof of his guilt. An hour before I thought all the men were my friends; now here I stood condemned as a thief, without one to plead for me. I remember that that very morning Aunt Anne had read the psalm which says the Lord is "a very present help in trouble;" and then came to my mind that David had prayed, "Hide not

thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call, answer me speedily." So I prayed God to help me. I prayed softly to myself, so no one knew I was praying. I asked God that I might not be wrongly judged.

Many of the men laughed at me, and said they always thought me a sanctimonious hypocrite. Others, who were older, said that was what I got from associating with bad companions. I told them that Ann was not a companion of mine; but no one believed me, for she had always told them I was, and that I was none too good either. The affair began to look dark for me. There stood Mr. Sampson as angry as could be. Several of the men testified that Ann and I were there together, and the carman, who had been paid, said he saw Mr. Sampson lay down the pocket-book. I myself also felt obliged to say that I saw the pocket-book, and that he did not put it in his pocket. The theft lay between Ann and

myself. The question was, even if she had it, had she not taken it with my consent, and was not I to share its contents with her. One of the head men—Mr. Leggett—was called. He had always been friendly to me, and was surprised to hear the statement of Mr. Sampson. He was a friend of Dr. Gibson, and the thought that through his recommendation I had got this place, mortified me the more, as I thought I might bring disgrace on my best friends. I think Mr. Sampson was thinking of the same thing, for he turned to Mr. Leggett and said, “I never did believe in taking these low street boys; they never entirely get over their vicious ways. The good Doctor is easily imposed on. Because this chap began to talk religion, we must needs take him by the hand and trust him. Now see, the first temptation he is at his old tricks again ! ”

“Not quite so hasty, Sampson,” said Mr. Leggett; “don’t condemn a fellow without a hearing. I don’t believe he is a bad boy; he

has an honest face. You never was a thief? you never stole anything in your life, my lad, did you?"

The color came again to my face. What could I say? I recalled all the teachings of Miss Gibson. I could not tell a lie.

My hesitation created an unfavorable impression among the workmen. I knew full well that there were some of them there who had stolen things years ago, as well as I, and yet they would have plumply denied it. I knew that there were honest men there who had never in their lives stolen anything; so that, as I looked up at the workmen who stood around me, I felt very sure that there was not one there who would have answered as I felt obliged to.

"Sir," I said, looking up straight in Mr. Leggett's face, "I once was a poor boy on the street. I had no one to look after me or care for me. I would lie, steal, and cheat. That was long ago. Yet I cannot say I never stole anything, for at that time I did. I am sorry

for all that. I have for this long time led a different life. Sir, I did not steal the wallet. I do not know who did. Believe me, sir, I never took a cent's worth of anything since I have been in your employ."

My words had a good effect on some of the men. I could see they liked the candor with which I spoke. Others still looked on me as a hypocrite; but Mr. Leggett, who had looked me steadily in the face all the while I spoke, was impressed in my favor.

"Jack," he said, "I believe you; but the thing must be inquired into." Then he turned to the men and told them all to go back to their work. He called me to follow him to his office, where we talked the whole matter over again. I told him candidly about my whole life. I think he was pleased with me, but he told me I might go home for the rest of the day, and that he would see me again about the matter.

I went home with a very heavy heart. I thought it strange that God should punish me

for the sins of my youth ; but for all that, I kept praying all the way home that my innocence might be made plain. I repeated to myself those words in the XXV Psalm, " Remember not the sins of my youth nor my transgressions : according to thy mercy, remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord."

I found, on reaching the house, that Pat was much worse. Aunt Anne thought him dying. She said I ought to find Ann and bring her in, for Pat could not last much longer ; and also she wanted me to go for Miss Gibson. I could not consent to go near Ann Molloy, but I ran off as fast as I could for Miss Gibson. She was not in, but the servant thought she had gone down town in the carriage, and that I might meet her on the way. Just as I was about turning down our street, I saw her carriage, and beckoning the coachman to stop, I told her that Aunt Anne thought Pat was dying. As we went in the house together, I detained her in the

hall to tell her all that had happened in the morning, for I felt very miserable; but if only she and the good Doctor believed me innocent, that I could bear what every one else said.

When we entered Pat's room we found him scarcely able to speak. At times he would rally and seem quite strong, and after a time would sink away again, so that we could scarcely hear his words. Miss Gibson felt that Ann should be summoned to see her brother die; but, with her usual thoughtfulness, she would not allow me to go, but sent some other messenger, whom she also directed to go for her father. Now see how the Lord hears prayer, and how that which seems to be chance is all ordered by Him. When Miss Gibson's messenger reached her house, Mr. Leggett was there. He had called to state the case of the theft to the Doctor, and to ask him what he knew of my previous history. He came with the Doctor, in the carriage, at his invitation, to see how matters were going

on at our house. Scarcely had the Doctor and Mr. Leggett entered the room, when Ann Molloy arrived. She came up to the head of the bed, and was leaning over to take Pat's hand, when suddenly her eye fell on Mr. Leggett. She became frightened, and drew back as if she wanted to go away. Miss Gibson saw the motion. "Ann," she said, "you owe it to the cause of justice and humanity to clear the innocent. I have kindly cared for your brother through all his sickness; now at his dying bed I command you to give up that which you have stolen." She spoke low, so that Pat could not hear her voice; but to the rest of us her words were distinct.

A profuse perspiration broke out on the face of the miserable creature. She looked around as if she was trying to find some way of escape. She put her hand in her pocket and drew out a miserable rag of a handkerchief to wipe her face; out from it, directly on Pat's dying bed, fell the wallet!

"Tell this gentleman," said Miss Gibson,

pointing to Mr. Leggett, "if Jack told you to steal it. Tell the truth, Ann, beside this dying bed."

"Oh," she cried, "they'll put me in jail for it. Oh! oh! Yes, I did steal it. Jack knows nothing about it. I saw it on the bench. I noticed that he did not see it, so I slyly slipped it in my pocket, and then they put me out of the gate."

At the sound of her voice Pat roused up, and Aunt Anne held the pillows, so that his head was higher, and he could see us all. He recognized the Doctor. "Oh, sir," said he, "you and the young lady have been so good to me, let me, before I die, thank you for what you have done, and may the dear Jesus, whom you have taught me to love, reward you for your kindness."

"There is something you can do for me, Pat," said the Doctor. "I am sorry to disturb you now, but I want you to tell this gentleman what you think of Jack. Is he honest? Could you trust him?"

"Trust him, sir? With uncounted gold, if I had it. He will never steal now, sir."

"Do you think it likely that Jack told Ann to steal this pocket-book?"

He seemed at once to comprehend the state of the case; and, as if he was anxious to do a last good deed for me, he said, in a tone louder than I would have thought possible:

"Sir, she is my sister. I am sorry for her, but I know she stole it herself. She hates Jack. She persecutes him in every way. Oh, don't believe any harm of Jack if she accuses him of evil. I am sorry to be obliged to say so, but she must be the guilty one, not Jack."

The Doctor handed the pocket-book back to Mr. Leggett, saying:

"I think, sir, you can take the testimony of a dying man."

Dr. Gibson took Pat by the hand and felt his pulse. Then we all knelt down as he made a short prayer. Mr. Leggett and the Doctor then went out.

Pat asked Birdie to sing "Rock of Ages," and afterwards, "Jesus, Lover of my soul." Miss Gibson staid with us until nearly evening, and then went home. Pat seemed at times to revive, but after a while he closed his eyes and apparently went to sleep. He slept calmly for an hour, and then his breath became shorter, and at last it ceased altogether. Poor Pat was dead.

When I went back to my work, Mr. Leggett called me in his office. He told me that he had stated to the men that the wallet had been found, and that I was entirely innocent. He said that he had not mentioned the fact of Ann Molloy's having it, so that I need say nothing to the men about her. When I went back to the shop, the men all spoke to me in the most friendly manner. Even those who had blamed me or suspected me before, shook hands with me; but I must say I did not value the friendship of some of them as I did, because I could see now that when I was in

trouble they forsook me, and only when I was in prosperity they were willing to be friendly. "The Lord is your best friend, Jack," says I; "stick to Him."

CHAPTER XVII.

SUNDAY is always a pleasant day to me. It never seems tiresome now that we had a pleasant home. When I used to be lounging and idling in the street, it often seemed tedious. Aunt Anne allows me an hour's sleep more on Sunday than on week days, because, she says, that, being tired from a whole week's work, it rests me more, and I am better fitted to enjoy the remainder of the day. Then we have prayers and breakfast, and Birdie and I sit together and study our Sunday-school lessons. Somehow the day seems more calm, the sunshine falls more pleasantly on the carpet, the clock ticks more solemnly in the corner; everything seems more peaceful on that day than any other. Aunt Anne has on her spectacles, and sits in the rocking-chair in the corner, reading her

Bible until time to get ready, and then we all go to prepare for church. Oh, if all boys would only believe what I tell them, that life spent in this way is so much more satisfactory than spent in taverns, in drinking saloons, and gambling houses! I have seen fellows sit smoking in a bar-room all day Sunday, go home drunk, and wake up on Monday with a miserable headache, utterly unfit for work.

Aunt Anne, Birdie, and I used to go to church together after Pat's death, and we all enjoyed the service. In the afternoon Birdie and I used to go to Sunday-school, and then Miss Gibson took Birdie home with her to tea, so that she should sing for the Doctor. These visits improved Birdie very much. They made quite a little lady of her, for she was naturally quick to learn, and she had a great sense of propriety. She liked to be polite, for she said to me one day, when I was a little rough (you know a boy like me will be rough in his manners. I don't say it to excuse myself, for I think there is no excuse for

being unmannishly); well, Birdie said to me, the "Bible tells us to be polite, Jack." "Does it? I guess you are mistaken!" said I. But she brought the Bible. "'Be courteous!' there it is, Jack, 1 Pet. 3 : 8." That is so. Well, as I was saying, Birdie used to sing after tea for the Doctor, and Miss Gibson and I will tell you what came of it. Miss Gibson sent for me one evening. She wished, she said, to consult with me on a proposition the Doctor had made. He wanted Birdie to learn music. He thought that she might support herself as she grew older by this beautiful talent which God had given her. Her voice was such that, if properly cultivated, she would be independent of any help from others. He was willing to pay for the instruction she needed, if I felt that I could trust the whole matter to him. This was the substance of what she said to me. I was perfectly abashed. To think of the great Doctor Gibson condescending even to ask poor Jack about the matter! Who but a man so truly

Christian would have been so condescending and magnanimous! It raised my respect for myself; it doubled my love and admiration for the Doctor; and, if such a thing were possible, it increased my interest in Birdie's welfare. Many a one would have had her taught and said nothing to me about it, as, of course, I could not object, and must, under any circumstances, have felt grateful. But when the Doctor paid me this respect, and treated me with such politeness, and thus tacitly acknowledged my right to a certain guidance and direction over Birdie, I felt more desirous to be noble and manly than I had ever felt before, and I felt a greater responsibility resting upon me to prove myself worthy of the Doctor's good opinion.

I do think that a real Christian gentleman like the Doctor makes it easier for us to be good, because such men are constantly holding up before our eyes the pattern which we can copy. They are epistles known and read of all men, the Bible says. Perhaps I ought

not to say that they are a pattern for us to copy, for I know we must take Christ as our great example. But when we are learning about Christ, we naturally look to His people to see how they are acting. Oh, how I wish all Christian gentlemen would make a Christian life plainly to be read by us who have not much learning! For although some of them are, I doubt not, epistles for God yet the writing is very indistinct, and unless ~~a~~ a look close, you cannot read it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ONE thing was at times a source of regret to Birdie and myself, and that was that Jim and Tiny were not with us. I did not worry so much about Jim, because I saw that he was well taken care of, and also that the lady was giving him a good education; but poor Tiny! I felt very badly that she could not be with us. Miss Gibson did not think it right that we should take her away from the woman who had always taken care of her. She thought, also, that we were both too young to have the charge of her ourselves. I had freely confessed how I had stolen Tiny, and with what unfortunate results; and Miss Gibson advised me, as the only thing that I was able to do, to visit Tiny often, and make her as comfortable as I could, and to do all that we could in the way of assisting Mrs.

Dunn herself. Therefore Birdie and I went there often. I would do errands for her, and Birdie would help her with her work.

One morning Mrs. Dunn sent word to us that Tiny was very sick. She had measles, and had taken cold. I staid with her until it was time for me to go to my work. Birdie sat with Tiny all day, so that Mrs. Dunn could go on with her work. Mrs. Dunn said that she had never known a more attentive little nurse. Birdie tended the child, and watched over her just as a grown woman might have done. I think she was very fond of Tiny—more fond than Tiny was of her. I don't think that Tiny was a gentle, tender-hearted child like Birdie. She was cold, and did not seem to care much if any one loved her or not. She never returned our love and caresses with any warmth. If she had enough to eat and drink, and she was let alone, she was content. Birdie and I were more alike in our ardent desire to have people love us and think well of us, and to do something

in return for the kindness shown us. Tiny was very petulant, but Birdie never got out of humor with her now, and would try in every way to do what she could to amuse her. I could not but observe the great change in this respect in my Birdie. She was trying very hard to be a Christian, and praying every day that God would help her. In the care of Tiny she was often very much tried, for not only was Tiny impatient and irritable, but Mrs. Dunn herself was very requiring. She was evidently jealous of the attention Birdie received from Miss Gibson, and she would tell her that she was proud and stuck up, and would taunt her in many ways there were hard to bear. Birdie tried not even to notice it, and always thought of some excuse to be made for Mrs. Dunn's sharp words, or to give some kind-hearted reason for Tiny's petulance. Once I interfered, and told Mrs. Dunn that if she talked so rudely Birdie should not come and help her any more. Then Birdie said, " You should not feel so. I

must do all I can for the dear Jesus' sake. You know He says if we are kind to those only who are kind to us, we are only doing what every one does. If we are Christians, there is more expected of us. We must be kind to those who do not treat us well. It would be very easy for me to watch over Tiny if she was patient, for I do love her so; and if Mrs. Dunn did not speak so sharply, I should be so happy in working for her. Now I am not quite so happy in working here, but I must do it all the same for the dear Jesus' sake, because it is my duty." She hesitated a moment, as if thinking the matter over, and then added, "Not that we can earn heaven by good works, Jack; that is a Roman Catholic error; but Christ has bid us do these things for each other, and therefore we do them in obedience to Him."

I used to think that the description of charity in the XIII chapter of Corinthians would apply to my Birdie. "Charity suffereth long

and is kind ; charity envieth not ; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."

Birdie would sing for Tiny all the pretty hymns and tunes she had learned in the Sunday-school ; and this always delighted Tiny, for, like Birdie, she was fond of music. I did not think that the child was very sick, and I sometimes fancied that Mrs. Dunn kept Birdie there so much just to please herself, and because Birdie was so patient and helpful ; but I was mistaken, and did injustice to Mrs. Dunn. Aunt Anne told me that Tiny would never get well. She had taken a very heavy cold, and, not having a strong constitution, she could not get over it. They were right and I was wrong, for Tiny died, with her arms around Birdie's neck, as Birdie was singing her to sleep. It was the long sleep from which she should never awaken. Birdie cried as if her heart would break. I felt sorry that all my life I had done so little for poor Tiny. She would never have been a healthy child. Had she lived to grow up, she

would always have been weak and sickly. I tried to comfort Birdie by telling her this, but I believe she would have been willing to take care of her and wait on her all her life, had she only been spared to us.

The lady who had adopted Jimmy hired a carriage for him and Birdie and myself, together with Aunt Anne, to go to the cemetery. Miss Gibson had told us that we might go to visit Pat Molloy's grave at the same time. When the service was all over and everybody had gone away but ourselves, we three children sat under the shade of a great tree to rest. How beautiful everything looked, and how quiet, to us who came from the bustle of a city! "Every tree seems to point up to God," said Birdie; "its roots only are in the ground, but all its growth is upward and heavenward. I never noticed before how everything in the country points us to God."

"Even the very blades of grass," said Aunt Anne; "see, Birdie, how perfect every little leaf is. Although there are millions, each

one is perfect, and each grows after the pattern of its own family. Here are clover-leaves, and here is some coarse grass, and yonder some wild flowers springing up in the grass. God covers over the earth with this green coverlid, and then makes it beautiful with flowers. How good He is!"

"In the winter," said I, "the trees look as if they were dead. I never could believe that they could look as they do now when I saw them at poor Pat's funeral, if I did not know it from having seen them before. Miss Gibson told us that Tiny would not always sleep here in this grave, but that she would come forth at the resurrection. That would be hard for me to believe but for these trees. They seem to make it plainer to me. For now the trees, which looked as if they were dead, look more beautiful even than before."

So we sat under the great trees and talked until Jimmy got tired. Then I took him by the hand and showed him some of the marble

monuments, and Birdie and I wandered about with him while Aunt Anne rested.

We visited Pat Molloy's grave before we left the cemetery. Everywhere it looked so calm and quiet, that we felt more content to leave those there whom we loved. I could see that Birdie felt more peaceful; but then hers is such a trusting heart, and she loves the dear Jesus so, that she feels resigned sooner than I do. I could not but feel disappointed and as if I could question the Lord's right to take Pat away from us, now that he had just got so good that we all loved him. When he died I had not given up the idea that he would get well, and then I thought he would be such a pleasant companion for me. "Why did the Lord take him, for I am sure he was now just fitted to live?" I said to Birdie.

"Jack," she replied, "the Lord is a great deal wiser than the wisest of men. I think such weak creatures as you and I may safely trust Him. You know if, at the very first, we had trusted Miss Gibson, we might have

saved ourselves a great deal of trouble; don't let us make a greater mistake by not trusting the Lord. I believe that if we love Him, all things will turn out for the best for us. I am going to trust in Him fully." Then we sat down under a large elm, and Birdie sung the hymn she had sung at Pat's request before he died, and the one she was singing to Tiny when she died. Then we got into the carriage and drove back to town.

CHAPTER XIX.

OUR minister preached one day from the text, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in Heaven;" and that afternoon Miss Gibson explained to us the difference between doing good for the sake of being praised by men and boasting about our good deeds, on the one side, and on the other, that shamefacedness which will not allow us to speak up for Jesus, which hides our light, so that people do not see good works in us, which causes us to act so much like those who are not God's children, that our conduct brings no honor, but rather a reproach, upon the cause of Christ.

There were in our shop some men who were very profane. They could not say the simplest thing without an oath. This troubled

me very much. I could not bear to hear it; but they were so much older than I, that I dared not say anything. All the while my conscience troubled me that I did not speak up for Jesus. There was one lad younger than myself who also had acquired this fearful habit, and it struck me that I might at least speak to him.

One very stormy day, during the intermission between twelve and one o'clock, a group of us half-grown boys and older men stood around the heater, when the lad began to tell some vulgar story, interspersing it with great profanity. For a moment I raised my heart in prayer to God that He would help me, and that the men might take kindly what I meant to say. Then I turned to the lad. "Bill," said I, "it might do for low and vulgar people, for criminals and vagabonds, to feel interested in such stories, but I think that good and honest workmen, in a respectable place like this, must feel that you disgrace them by even thinking that such low stories would be

pleasant for them. And one thing more, lad; don't bring dishonor on the Lord by taking His name in vain. I, for one, protest against it." There was silence for a moment; no one said a word; but they all looked at each other. Then one of the older men spoke. "Jack," said he, "give me your hand; you're a brave fellow, and you put me to the blush for not having spoken up before myself. I am a member of the Methodist Church, and I have often felt sorry about these things, but I didn't like to speak."

"So am I," said another; "and it has been a weight on my conscience that I haven't spoken up for Jesus."

Another said, "Well, I don't belong to any church, and I don't profess to be any better than other folks; but I must say I like to hear Christians speak up and act up to what they do profess."

Another said, that as to being a Christian or not a Christian, that had nothing to do with it. He felt as a respectable, native-born

American ; he didn't want the words and ways of a loafer, and he felt himself above such low talk and such profanity.

Every one took it in good part, and I think what I said did good. It got for me a firm friend in one of our most skillful workmen, a man by the name of Charles Smith, known familiarly among us as Light Charley, to distinguish him from another man of the same name, who had very black hair and eyes, and who was known as Dark Charley. He was a fine fellow, as well as a good workman ; and he, when every one had ceased speaking and gone away, and I was alone, came up to me, and, shaking me by the hand, said, "I wish, lad, that we could find a little higher tone among some of our men. I think if there are those of us here who love Christ, we ought to speak up for Him."

He had some conversation one day with Mr. Leggett on the subject, and Mr. Leggett drew up a paper which Light Charley circulated among the men. It was an appeal to

all not to use profane language in our yard and shop. The consequence was, that the worst of the men saw they were not held in as high respect; and whatever they might have done in the street, in the premises where we worked there was a great change.

CHAPTER XX.

M R. LEGGETT was a great temperance advocate. He brought in one day a pledge for the men. Quite a number signed, and I among the rest. Somehow I always go with all my heart into everything I undertake. He left the paper with me, as he was called out to see a gentleman on business, and I so vigorously pleaded the temperance cause, that I did not see he had returned, and was looking at me through the window, until the men began to laugh. He said to me that night before I went home, "Jack, I'm going to get up a temperance meeting here in the shop next week, Wednesday. Suppose you be one of the speakers." "I one of the speakers, sir!" I exclaimed, in surprise; "why I never spoke in my life." "That is the very reason why you should now begin. Just

speak as you did to-day to the men. It will have a good effect. I will put your name down as one of the speakers; so prepare yourself."

When I told Birdie, I expected her to be as much surprised as I had been; instead of that, she said, in the coolest manner, "Of course you can speak, Jack, and it is your duty to do it." I was completely taken aback, for I confess I can talk enough, as you must see from my story, but to speak—regularly to speak—that is quite another matter.

Some people believe that you should not make preparation to speak, but trust in the Lord, and He will put the words in your mouth which you ought to say. But I believe in doing both—both making preparation and trusting in the Lord. I kept thinking all the while what I should say. I had it all studied out in my own mind exactly how I should begin, what arguments I should use, and what brilliant idea I should close with. When the evening came, I was frightened almost out of

my wits; certainly out of all memory of what I had proposed to say. I felt like creeping into the forge, or up the chimney, or under the heater, anywhere out of sight; and my heart beat like a trip-hammer. When Mr. Leggett called out my name, and, taking me by the hand, led me out on the platform, which we had made of boards placed over half a dozen barrels, I could not see. I felt perfectly blind. I raised a moment my heart to God in prayer. The mist slowly dispersed from my eyes, and in a distant corner of the great shop I saw Dark Charley laughing at me. Somehow I felt angry and forgot all my fear. I did not say one word of my studied address, but I told them, from personal knowledge, what misery a drunkard brings to his family. My tongue got fairly loosed; I had no want of words or thoughts, and I threw all my natural enthusiasm and fervor into what I said. The fine ideas and studied words with which I had hoped to create an impression were entirely forgotten. I felt

what I said, and I said what I felt; for I was then and there an earnest lad, trying to do earnest work. When I closed, the men applauded as if they would never stop. They even cheered again and again. "That is because I am one of themselves," said I to Mr. Leggett. He smiled. "Jack, you did well!" said he, and that made me happy.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF all the men in our shop, there was only one whom I really disliked—that was Charley Smith, the one known as Dark Charley. I had never thought much about him either way until the time of the temperance lecture; then I could see from his manner that he was jealous of me, and wanted to stir up the boys against me. I think that he was fond of a glass of whiskey from time to time, and did not like the introduction of the pledge; so he went about in a sly, underhanded way to put down the friends of temperance, beginning with the foremost, and that was myself. He began, in the meanest of all ways, by treacherously trying to appear my friend. "Jack," said he one day, "you are a smart fellow; it is a pity you can't write." "Yes," said I; "I am going to take lessons

soon: I've been to night-school, but there are so many things for me to learn, that I've rather neglected that. However, I don't mind. Some extra lessons will bring me all straight." "I'll give you some lessons myself that'll cost you nothing, if you'd like to learn," he said. I had some misgivings when fellows like him get to be so kind; but it did seem so ill-natured in me to feel so, that I was ashamed of myself, particularly as I knew he wrote a very clear, bold hand. At first I said nothing, and then he spoke up, "Too proud to learn of a poor man like me, eh, Jack? Better let Mr. Leggett or Dr. Gibsen help you!" "Don't speak that way, Charley," said I. "I'm independent if I am poor. I don't want help from any one when I can pay for a thing myself." Here for a while the matter ended; we both went on with our work. A few days after he joined me in the street on my way home, and said, "Jack, I'll own up; I'm in want of a little change, and if you're going to pay any one to teach you:

writing, why not pay me? I'll ask you about half what a regular writing teacher would ask, as I happen to need a little money, and I can give you a lesson in the shop evenings before we go home." It seemed odd to me that Dark Charley should need money, for he got good wages and had no family; but then I didn't know his circumstances, so I took his word for it, but I didn't like the idea of remaining after hours in the shop; it was against the rule, and I told him so. He said that our homes lay in different directions, and the shop being midway, would accommodate both; and as to its being against the rule, why the watchman who had charge of that part of the premises was an old friend of his, and would overlook the fact of our sitting there an hour later for a while. At any rate, we might try it; and if there were objections made, why then it would be time enough to make other arrangements. Now I want to say to boys, here and now, that when you think a thing is wrong, let it alone; don't

keep talking about it until you begin to think it is right. Don't let a fellow older than you persuade you into doing a thing when you know it is wrong. I knew then, as well as I know now, that it was wrong to stay in the shop after work-hours ; the rule was for the men to go home who were not at work, and that part of the shop was then put in charge of a night-watch, and I had no right to break the rule. I was a simple fellow to allow myself to be made a tool of by Dark Charley. I felt flattered by this notice of a man so much older than myself, and allowed myself to be blinded by his words. If I had exercised my common sense, I might have known that the little money he might gain from teaching me at a reduced price could not have been his object ; that there must have been something behind it all, as I learned too late there was. Dark Charley was a very bad fellow ; he had only been two years in the country, and no one knew very much about him. Mr. Leggett did not like him, and had always sus-

pected him of not being entirely honest. While he was in the shop he always had proved himself industrious; and none of us boys thought much about him one way or the other. He was not on very intimate terms with any of the workmen, and his offer to give me lessons was always made when we were alone, although at the time I did not observe that. I, dupe as I was of his flattery, thinking that in just one or two lessons I could be made a beautiful penman, bought pen, ink, and paper. He excused himself for one or two evenings after I was ready, saying that he had such a severe sore throat, that he did not like to be out late in the night air. But one very windy, disagreeable night he came to me with an apology for having put me off so long, and said he would set me a copy and give me some instruction, but could not remain as long with me as he ought on account of his throat, which still troubled him. I said that I did not care to remain there alone, as the watchman did not know

me, and would probably put me out; and then, beside, there was no haste; it was not necessary that I should begin just then. He urged me very strongly, and said he really began to think I was afraid to be left alone, and laughed at me. I did not speak up then as I ought. I should have told him plainly and boldly that we were breaking the rules, and that I wouldn't do it. If he would come to my house I would take lessons of him, otherwise not. But I was ashamed lest he should think me a coward, and I was afraid to be laughed at; so I staid. He set me a copy, and telling me how I was to hold my pen, and how I was to place my hand and move my fingers, he left me, saying that the next time he hoped to stay with me through the whole lesson. He also charged me to fill up the entire page, and not to attempt to write rapidly. After he left I concluded that I would not remain; and just then thinking I heard the step of the watchman, I folded up the paper and wiped the pen preparatory to

going. Just then an inner door was opened ; but instead of the watchman, it was Mr. Leggett. "Why, Jack," he exclaimed, "what are you doing here ?" I felt mortified at being seen thus by Mr. Leggett, for I like him very much, and was ashamed to have him know that I was thus deliberately breaking the rules. I generally try to be an outspoken fellow, and not to sneak off now and hide my faults with a lie, so I spoke out candidly, and looking Mr. Leggett full in the face, told all that had been arranged between Dark Charley and myself, and begging his pardon for infringement of the rule, said I would go home at once. "Stay, Jack," said he ; "how are you going to get out ?" "This way, sir," said I, pointing to the door through which Charley had gone. "Try it," said he. I did so ; it was locked. I was a prisoner in the shop. I looked up with great surprise at Mr. Leggett. He could not help smiling at my consternation. "Jack," said he, "I think you have fallen into a trap !" I did not un-

derstand him, and said so; but he made no reply. He put the gas down low, and stood with his watch in his hand. He stood in a listening attitude, and did not say a word. "Won't you please let me out, sir?" I asked, in a low voice. "No, Jack," he replied. "Dark Charley has fastened that door on the outside, and I do not wish to go into the office or through the yard." I did not know what to do. There I stood beside Mr. Leggett, wondering what would happen next. I felt provoked at myself beyond measure for being duped by Dark Charley, although I did not exactly know yet what might be his object. We waited, I should think, half an hour, although to me it seemed double that time. I heard the clock of St. Paul's strike, and thought that Birdie would feel anxious about me. Mr. Leggett took off his hat once or twice, and wiped the perspiration from his bald head. I did not feel very warm myself, and wondered why he should feel so overheated. Another half hour passed. Mr. Leg-

gett had seated himself on the bench, and paid no attention to me whatever. Only once or twice, when I moved, he said, "Hush, Jack." He did not speak as if he felt vexed or angry at me; only as if he wanted to listen. Presently we heard a low and cautious step, and the door through which Mr. Leggett had entered was slowly opened. It was the watchman. He laid his finger on his lip as if to enjoin silence, held up two fingers, nodded his head, and withdrew. I began to be dreadfully worried. I saw that something was going to happen; I didn't know what; and I felt mortified that in some way, I could not tell how, I was to be involved in it. Oh, how I wished myself at home, and how I regretted that I had allowed a bad fellow like Dark Charley to inveigle me into wrong-doing. I am fond of adventure, and if I could have been there to help catch a robber, or something of that sort, it would not have been so unpleasant; but to be obliged to sit perfectly still in almost darkness, listening for

—you hardly know what—and feeling like a mouse in a trap—well, to say the least of it, it was not pleasant. Presently, with the same caution as before, the door opened again, and the watchmen, with two others, appeared within. Our night-watchman beckoned Mr. Leggett, and on tiptoe he went across the shop, and they all talked in low whispers together. As they were about going back, our watchman caught sight of me, and looked surprised. Mr. Leggett whispered something to him, at which he smiled, and then they all closed the door very gently, and we were again left alone. I lay down on the floor, and, being tired, I got asleep. I cannot tell how long I had slept, when I was suddenly aroused by the report of a pistol. I jumped up and found myself alone. I was perfectly bewildered at first, and could not think how I happened to be in the shop at that time of night; but soon I recalled the events of the evening, and not seeing Mr. Leggett, I rushed through the door in the direction of the firing.

I arrived in time to see two men in custody of the three watchmen, and Mr. Leggett just entering from the office-door with another policeman. In almost less time than I have taken to describe it, the two burglars were captured, their pistols taken from them, and they hurried off in charge of the three policemen; our own watchman, Mr. Leggett, and myself being left alone. The watchman kept rubbing his hands together. "A good job, sir! a good job, sir!" he kept exclaiming. Mr. Leggett seemed to think the same, and polished his bald head again and again with his handkerchief; but I could see he did not feel quite well—the excitement had been almost too much for him. So I ran and got some water for him to drink. Then he seemed to recollect that I had been kept prisoner with him, so he said, "Ah, Jack, that bad fellow meant to get you into the plot; if it hadn't been for our faithful friend here," pointing to the watchman, "you would have been treated to a trial for burglary!" "How

so, sir ?" said I, quite bewildered. Then the watchman told me how that for a long time he had suspected Dark Charley of being an old offender—a jail-bird, he called him. How that he had followed him up very closely, and, with the aid of detectives, found out his tricks. He would not tell me how he had found out his intentions on this particular evening; but he had done so, and had warned Mr. Leggett in time to take every precaution against his escape. After breaking open the safe with his accomplice, they evidently intended in some way to implicate me. At any rate, the watchman would have seen me at a late and unusual hour about the premises, which would have seemed suspicious, if no clue had been discovered. Mr. Leggett thought that in some way his accomplice had led him to change his plans in regard to entering the door which he had locked, and which thus had prevented my going out. By being so immediately caught, he was prevented from putting his plans into execution. We

could not tell what exactly they were ; but this one thing we all felt, that, however innocent, I had run a very narrow chance of being taken up as a burglar's accomplice.

Mr. Leggett, who saw my innocence in the whole matter, became my fast friend, and after Dark Charley's trial he came to see us. Birdie sang for him, and we passed so pleasant an evening in Aunt Anne's cheerful little parlor, that I told him that I did "not grudge that dark evening in the shop if it only made him my friend;" but he shuddered even in thinking of it, and said, "Let it be a lesson to you, Jack, never take the first step towards what you know to be wrong, and never be ashamed to say *no* to wicked companions."

It is needless to say that I never took another writing-lesson in that way. I went to a regular teacher, and as I took great pains to learn, I now write a very good, plain business hand, which is certainly a useful accomplishment. Here let me say, that there is no excuse for a boy that cannot read and write

well, or who will not have an education. If he will only try, and is determined to learn, he can certainly find the means of doing so. A boy ought to blush for himself if he remains in ignorance. I was surprised to find how much happier I became for knowing how to read. There was no necessity for lounging about in saloons, or in the streets, even if I had been inclined to do so, for I could always find some nice stories in library-books with which to amuse myself. I also read books of travels, and histories of poor boys like myself, who had got along in the world. My own experience confirms what I read in such books of others, and that is, if a boy wants to learn, he always finds the means to do so, and the ignorant boys are such willfully.

CHAPTER XXII.

MISS GIBSON had told us before we were removed to the house of Mrs. Brown, whom we now call Aunt Anne, that she was neat and particular. I found this to be so, to even a greater extent than I anticipated; but now that I have got accustomed to it, I see that she is right. I, myself, like to see a house kept clean and nice, but at first it caused me a great deal of trouble. She made us put every thing in its place. I had a peg to hang my coat and hat on, and she would never let me throw them down on a chair. Miss Gibson taught us to respect the wishes of those older than ourselves with whom we live. She says that households would be much happier if the members consulted each other's tastes and wishes; where there are reasonable rules and requirements,

the younger members should submit to them pleasantly, and not be always trying to thwart or set them aside. Aunt Anne, in what I used to think her excessive neatness, would not allow me to come in the house with the heavy boots which I wore in the street. She purchased for me a nice pair of slippers, and these were kept at the basement door, in the hall, so that when I returned from my work I could put them on. I see now that she was right, although at first I did not like the plan at all. It saved her a great deal of sweeping and scrubbing, for the house was kept clean after it had been put in order. It also enabled me to go about without making so much noise. One evening, as I went up stairs, I heard Birdie talking to some one, as I thought; for on account of my having on my slippers, I walked so quietly that she did not hear my step. When I reached her door I found she was praying. I used to say the Lord's prayer, and sometimes, "Now I lay me down to sleep," etc., or offer some petition

for help and guidance, such as I had heard suggested in the church or Sunday-school. Birdie prayed very differently from this. She addressed the Lord as if to her He was a personal, present friend. I was so much struck with what she said, and her earnestness of manner, that I can recall almost every word; indeed it affected me so strongly that I became more earnest and simple in prayer myself. I left off the set phrases, which had very little meaning to me, as I only used them because other people did, and I asked the Lord for what I really wanted, as I heard Birdie doing. This is what she was saying as I reached her door: "My Father, you are very great; you made the stars which I now see shining in the sky. I am only a poor little girl; I havn't anything of my own. But I'm not afraid to come and ask you for what I want, because you've told me I may come. If I had plenty, and some poor child came and asked me for help, I would give it to them; and so I know you will help me, because

you are so much greater than I am. What I want to ask is, that Jack and I may be good and do what is right. Jack is very good to me; please to take care of him always, and you reward please, Father, because I cannot. And so is Miss Gibson; please take care of her, for Jack and I would have no one to care for us if it 'twasn't for her. Please let me act right, and speak right, and feel right, and Jack the same. I want them all to love me. Is it wicked to ask this? Whatever I ask that is wicked please to forgive, for I am only a little girl, and I don't know. I want Jack to be kept from sin and temptation; please, please take care of my dear Jack —" I think I must have unconsciously attracted her attention, for although her prayer was not finished, she opened her eyes and saw me, and then she stopped, and said "Amen." So as I came in, we began to talk about prayer. She said, "I think, Jack, we ought to pray to God just as a child talks to his father; for He is called our Father in heaven, so the name

must mean something. Now, if I was like Miss Gibson, and had a good father, as she has, I would like to tell him all my troubles and all my joys. I would ask him for just what I wanted, because I know from his great love, he would give me what I wanted, if it was right for me to have it. I would always have my heart open to him, so that he would know just what I am, and what I want. I have no father, so I go to God exactly as if He was my earthly father."

"I don't know about that, Birdie," said I. "I have asked God for a great many things that He hasn't given me. For instance—I have asked him to make me rich."

"He hasn't promised to make you rich, Jack. There are certain things, Miss Gibson says, God has promised that He will give to those who ask for them, and for these we may ask, feeling confident that we shall receive them. There are other things we may ask for, and He may give them, or He may not."

"I don't like that way, Birdie; when I ask for a thing, I want to get it."

"Of course you do, Jack; you want it, or you wouldn't ask for it; but you ought to feel at the same time that if God doesn't give it, then it is because you are better without it. I didn't want Miss Gibson to come into our room when you first got me back. I would have bolted her out forever, if I had had my own will. Yet what would I have been without her! Just so we are acting all the while. We want things exactly our own way. God sees that we are mistaken, so He does what is better for us; then sometimes we feel angry towards Him. I was angry when Miss Gibson came in. Now I see it was the best thing that could have happened to me."

"Birdie, do you think it wrong for me to ask God to give us riches?" asked I.

"No, Jack. But at the same time you must be willing to leave it to God, if he gives you riches or not. It seems to me that you might not be as good as you are now, if all

of a sudden you got a great sum of money ; but God may answer your prayer in this way—he may give you wisdom and intelligence, and make you successful in business, so that by industry and honesty you might get rich. Then your riches, you see, would be an answer to prayer, although it would seem as if it was all your own work."

"Who told you this, Birdie ?" I asked.

"Miss Gibson talked this matter over with me. Indeed, I have asked her many times about it, for this subject of prayer interests me so much. It is so pleasant for me to feel that our Father in heaven is always taking care of me ; that He takes care even of the wee little birds that go chirping about in the Park ; and then think of the myriads of dear little birds all over the whole world, and not only of birds, but of butterflies, and bugs, and creeping things, and animals, and trees ! Oh, think, Jack, of all the things there are in the world, and *our* Father takes care of them all ! He is so great, so very great, yet when I go

down on my knees, even I—I, your poor little Birdie, Jack—He will listen to my weak voice, and I may ask Him for just what I want, and then after I have asked Him, I feel so happy, because I *know* he has listened, and He seems to say to me, ‘Yes, dear little one, I have heard every word, and I will give you just what is best for you to have!’”

I wish you could have heard the way in which my dear Birdie said all this. She spoke so earnestly, so confidently, and the thoughts seemed to make her so happy! I knew she had learned it all from Miss Gibson. She is beginning to think and feel so much like that dear young lady.

Somehow I cannot take these things in as readily as she can; but her way of accepting these Bible truths makes me understand what that verse means: “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.” Birdie believes in what our Father in heaven tells us, and takes Him at His word.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ONE day Birdie was coming home in an omnibus from taking her music lesson. There were several men in the omnibus, two ladies, and herself. The ladies were very fashionably dressed, and talked very loud—so loud that Birdie could hear every word they said. Miss Gibson had taught Birdie never to talk loud in any public place; but I notice that there are those who call themselves ladies who do not attend to these little rules of politeness, which dear Miss Gibson took such pains to teach Birdie. She had also taught her never to listen to what others were saying, unless it was meant for her to hear; but in this case Birdie could not help it, for they talked so loud that every one in the stage could hear. I think that poor people might be got to be more polite if ladies and gentle-

men would always act in their presence with the same politeness that they show toward each other. These ladies seemed to think that it was no matter how loud they talked, so long as there were only plain-looking people in the stage. Well, as I said before, Birdie could hear very distinctly every word they said ; and they were talking about a concert which one of them was going to give for the benefit of the soldiers. This was near the close of our war ; and it was very fashionable for rich ladies to give entertainments at their own houses, and then hand over the money to the Sanitary Commission for the benefit of the sick and wounded. The one lady seemed greatly worried because one of the singers whom she had engaged was sick, and she wanted her friend, who, it seemed, was one of those who were to play on the piano, to find some one to supply her place. The other lady declared her inability to do so, and altogether they were in great distress, as the great concert was to come off that very week. They

declared that singers generally were very dis-obliging, and that if any one had a fine voice, that seemed to be sufficient reason for putting on airs and making themselves disagreeable. Ever since Birdie had heard of the suffering of the soldiers, and had seen how interested Miss Gibson felt in scraping lint and making shirts and havelocks and all sorts of things for their comfort, Birdie had felt the greatest desire to do something herself for them. She had helped to scrape lint, and she had made a needle-book filled with coarse needles and thread, and Miss Gibson had marked it as the gift of a little girl; but now she thought that if she might sing for them, it would be doing far more than she ever had done. She kept thinking of this all the time they were talking, until it did seem as if she could not keep quiet. We have talked this over since, and I have told her that I wished she could have spoken first to Miss Gibson, and she said she felt the same, but then, don't you see, she would have lost sight of the ladies altogether;

she must speak before she left the omnibus, or not at all. Her warm heart could not let this opportunity pass ; so she timidly touched the hand of one of the ladies, and, as the color mounted to her cheeks, she told her, in her own simple way, of her desire to help the soldiers, excusing herself thus for her apparent forwardness, and expressed a desire to be allowed to sing at the concert. She told me afterwards that she was very sorry the moment she had spoken, for the oldest of the two took out her eye-glass and studied her coldly from head to foot, while the other seemed greatly amused. Then they whispered as Birdie sat blushing deeply beside them, and she could hear the younger one say something about "liking the child's looks," and about the "novelty," and the "necessity of a variety," and so on. They talked so long that Birdie began to feel mortified at what she had done, and to regret that she had acted thus without Miss Gibson's consent, and she was about to pull the strap and get out and

walk the rest of the way home, when the younger of the ladies saw the motion, and stopped her. She questioned her as to whether she had ever been taught music, and by whom. They were surprised when they heard whose pupil she was, and that she was just then returning from taking her lesson. They examined the roll of music she held in her hand, and, after a little more whispering together, they both seemed equally anxious to secure her services, although Birdie could see that it did not seem to be for what they supposed she could do, as much as for the sake of having a little novelty, and also because they laid such emphasis on the fact of having so celebrated a teacher. The older lady took her card out of her pocket, with her address on it, and handed it to Birdie, asking her to come round the next evening and join in a rehearsal. Birdie did not know what this meant, and said that it was only for the good of the soldiers that she wanted to sing. The ladies laughed at this, and talked together

again, and finally did not think it worth while that she should practice with the rest at "the rehearsal," but gave her another card, which had on it the date, etc., of the concert, and which was one of those intended to invite the company with. They both told her to be sure and come, and to be there half an hour before the time on the card. Birdie told them that her coming would depend upon the consent of the young lady who paid for her musical instruction ; that if she would prefer that she should not come, that then they would receive a message to that effect ; but if the lady allowed her, then they would know by not receiving any message at all ; that she would be there punctually at the time required. The ladies both laughed again, and the younger complimented Birdie upon her business faculty, as displayed in this arrangement. Birdie, instead of going home, went direct to Miss Gibson, and laid the whole matter before her. To Birdie's credit, I must say, that she never withheld the least thing from Miss Gibson, or

never tried in any way to tell her things in a manner that would indicate her own preference. She always simply stated facts, and then abided by Miss Gibson's judgment. Miss Gibson knew these ladies. She said they were very fashionable and wealthy people up town. There was nothing to be said against them in any way; they were highly respectable; "but I do not think, my dear," she said, "that they will be careful of hurting your feelings. They are not Christian people, and they will make you feel that they consider you an inferior. They may make remarks in your presence which will cut you severely; but if you are willing to endure this for the sake of what you may do for the soldiers, I do not see any objection. They have a large music-room, and are what is called musical people; so if you would like to try your wings with this little flight, I will speak to Papa, and we will see what can be done about it." So that dear, good Miss Gibson made all the arrangements; and when the

evening came, it found us both at her door full an hour before the time. She had laughed at Birdie's idea of going in the plain gray delaine dress she wore to church. "Why," said Birdie, "I do not go to be seen; I go to do good; and I cannot see why my voice wouldn't sound as well in a neat delaine. I go to sing, not to show a dress." Then Miss Gibson drew her close to her heart and kissed her, and laughed, but the tears came to her eyes. "You simple-hearted little one," she said, "the people would laugh at you." "I shouldn't mind that. I go to sing—for nothing else. If I can sing well—if I can only sing well, I do not care in the least about my dress. And—and—O dear Miss Gibson, you know that Jack hasn't the money to buy me a new dress, and you do so much for me, that I really cannot let you give me one. It would be an unnecessary piece of extravagance." Then Miss Gibson laughed at Birdie's idea of extravagance, and the end of it all was, that when we went in at Dr. Gib-

son's, that dear young lady took Birdie up stairs, and there on the bed, all ready for her, was a white dress, and a sash, and a new hair ribbon to match. When Birdie came down stairs, I thought that never in my life had I ever seen any human being look so lovely. "Oh, Birdie," said I, "you are an angel, and not a Birdie any more! She shall not walk to the concert; I will carry her every step of the way on my back!" Miss Gibson and the Doctor both laughed very heartily, and the Doctor said, "Jack, you're an enthusiast!" "I hope that's nothing bad, sir!" said I. "Oh, no! It's something good!" said Miss Gibson, and then we all laughed together. There stood my Birdie, with her beautiful brown eyes and long eye-lashes; those eyes that, in the old times, used to look so sad, but now were only soft and sweet; and her soft, brown hair, held back by the pretty ribbon, and a necklace of rose-colored coral about her throat, and her simple white dress! The sash and the coral and the hair ribbon were all one

shade ; so that she had no mixing up of colors about her, as I have seen on vulgar, over-dressed people ; but it had just the effect of coloring enough to light up her eyes and hair. I could see that both the Doctor and the dear young lady were admiring her as much as I did, and I felt just like going down on my knees to them both. As it was, I could only clasp my hands in a foolish way I have when I get excited, and just say, "Oh, Doctor ! Oh, Miss ! what might have become of her if you hadn't cared for her !" And then the Doctor blew his nose in his great silk hand-kerchief, and flourished it before his eyes, and Miss Gibson leaned down over the child to arrange her sash. The roll of music which Miss Gibson herself had selected for Birdie to sing lay on the table ; and she wanted Birdie to sing all the pieces over once more, to see if all was right. I was afraid that when the time came to appear before the company, she would be frightened ; but Miss Gibson did not fear that in the least, for I think she noticed

that Birdie was not a nervous, fussy child. She was always quiet and gentle, and never seemed to think about herself or how she was appearing; and on this occasion the thought that she was going to do good for the poor soldiers, and to use the one talent God had given her for Him, in trying to help the helpless, made her quietly happy. No other thought about the impression she might make, or what people would say of her personally, seemed for a moment to enter her mind. Presently I saw the carriage come to the door. They were really going to send us in the carriage! I said we could walk just as well, but no one else except Birdie entertained that idea for a moment; so the footman slammed the door, and the carriage rolled off with Birdie and me. I had on my best gray Sunday suit of clothes, and my hair—well it is no use to say my hair was nicely brushed, for it is so stiff and hard that I just keep it cut off close tight to my head, so that my head looks pretty much like a round hair-brush; and I

know I'm not very handsome, but Dr. Gibson has told me many times that I have "such a good, honest, straightforward face." It pleases me wonderfully to hear the Doctor say that. I know that Birdie thinks me perfect, from the crown of my head to the sole of my feet, because she loves me so much, just as I do her; for Birdie and I are all the world to each other.

When we reached the house we were shown through the music-room to a small apartment opening off from the rear of it, where those were assembled who were to take part in the performance. What gay dresses, and what jewelry were there displayed! What flowers, artificial all of them! What shining of satin and rustling of silk! What richly tinted fans, and odor of sandal-wood! And what hair! oh, what quantities of hair these ladies had! I didn't see how it was that these fine ladies should have such immense heads of hair, so much more than we poor people, unless it might be that doing nothing makes

the hair grow. And I should have thought they would have kept on their shawls, for their dresses were made so low in the neck. Miss Gibson had said the ladies would be in "full dress," but I saw that she was mistaken. My Birdie, among all these gay creatures, looked like a little canary among a flock of parrots and macaws. There was one who seemed to be of great importance; they called her Madame. I never saw such red cheeks and black eyebrows as she had. Then there was a very tall gentleman, who wore his hair parted in the middle, and had an eye-glass swinging from a ribbon round his neck. When Madame asked if the tenore had come, he stepped forward and made a very low bow to her, his eye-glass swinging almost to the ground; so I suppose his name was Mr. Tenore, as also another short, stout, fat gentleman must have been named Mr. Basso. I stood half-hidden behind the heavy crimson curtain, so I could see everything going on without being noticed myself. Nobody paid the least

attention to Birdie; no one spoke to her, until the lady whom she had met in the omnibus—the younger one—who was to play on the piano, came in. After she had taken off her white silk cloak, she pointed out the child to a tall gentleman, who seemed to be the leader. He put an eye-glass tight up to his eye and scowled at her, then whispered to Madame, who frowned at her; then they both whispered to a tittering young lady, who shrugged up her bare shoulders until I feared she would slide out of her dress. Mr. Basso, whose eyes were so prominent that they seemed as if they would burst out of his head, came close up to Birdie, and asked her some question which she did not understand; the lady who was to play on the piano told some one else to say to him that the child could not speak French, at which he seemed disgusted, and went off. I could see very plainly that these fine people did not approve of having Birdie there, and there grew quite a dispute as to when she should sing and as

to where she should be placed on the programme. The tall man with an enormous moustache, examined her music and shrugged his shoulders; it was only when he was told whose pupil she was, that he looked at her with any degree of complacency. There was a celebrated violinist who just then came in. To him they all spoke respectfully, and he seemed to fancy Birdie, for he spoke pleasantly to her in broken English, when he saw her. I think she felt encouraged from the time he came into the room, and in her innocent, simple way she looked up confidently to him, as if he would shelter her from the coldness and haughtiness which was beginning to chill her. He had a long conversation, in some foreign tongue, with the leader, who gesticulated very much and talked with his hands and head as fast as with his tongue. Then everything seemed arranged, and after awhile the audience getting impatient, the concert was opened by a long performance on two pianos. All the playing and singing was

nothing to me, half-hidden there behind the curtain, until the time when it came Birdie's turn to sing. Now when Madame had been escorted on the platform, she had curtesied very low, first to one side, then the other, then to Mr. Tenore, who led her on, and who was to sing with her, and then again to the audience and then to the gentleman who threw her a bouquet, which Mr. Tenore picked up, and then to another, and another who threw bouquets at her, until she looked to me like the bowing figures of a Chinese mandarin. And when she sang she twisted and worked her face up in such a curious way that I wondered the people did not laugh.

When my Birdie was led on before the ladies and gentlemen, the violinist said a few words of encouragement to her, and she looked up innocently in his face and smiled, and then she simply curtesied and opened her music; but she knew the piece—it was only held in her hand lest she might get frightened. She began; my heart was in my throat—I came

out entirely from behind the curtain to listen. O my Birdie! she sang as the robin sings in the early morning, with clear fresh notes, when the early dew is upon the flowers and the flush of the rising sun upon the sky! She trilled, as they say the skylark trills when he rises from the earth to his morning flight among the clouds.

They listened; yes, they listened as they hadn't done to the gay and painted Madame, for Birdie touched their hearts, and all who loved music, as well as all who understood it, leaned forward to hear her. It was so still, so still, no rustling silks or fluttering fans disturbed the silence. And when she curtesied again and withdrew, then the people clapped their hands as if they were wild. I could not imagine why they kept on making so much noise. At last, as they did not stop, the great violinist took her by the hand and brought her before the people again, and then they clapped more than ever, and it seemed as if they wouldn't stop, and some one cried

Encore. I didn't know what he meant; and some one told Birdie she would have to sing her piece over again, but the violinist said no, it would try the child's voice too much; so he selected another piece—a simple song. The gentleman with the parted hair kept his eye-glass screwed tight in his eye, and looked at Birdie as if he didn't recognize the same child he had scowled at just before. The stout Mr. Basso, every time he came up to her said, "Mong jew." I wonder if he thought that was her name. Then she went on with singing the piece they had picked out for her, and when she had finished it, for it was just a sweet, simple little song, some in the crowd wanted her to sing it again; but I could see they were afraid Madame might be angry, and that some of the other performers would get displeased, so Birdie quietly stepped aside until her turn should come again. After the short intermission, came some instrumental music. Birdie was told by the leader that she was to sing after a duet by two gentlemen. When

the time came, the violinist stepped forward again, leading Birdie by the hand, and she sang the piece Miss Gibson had selected for her; and then what clapping there was again, and then she had to sing another little song. I noticed now, as I hadn't done before, that among two or three elderly gentlemen near the platform, sat Dr. Gibson! He hadn't told us he was to be there. When Birdie finished her singing he beckoned to the violinist, who, it seems, was an old friend of his, (ah, I knew then who had put in a good word for Birdie), and the violinist, instead of leading the child back into the room at the rear of the stage, brought her down among the company, and Dr. Gibson took her by the hand and kissed her, and said something comforting, and caressed her. I could see now that she was almost overcome by the exertion she had made, and she leaned her pretty brown head upon the old Doctor, as if she had been his child, and he kept smoothing down her soft curls and patting her on the

head all the time he was talking to his friend, the great violinist. I, behind the curtain, felt so proud and happy that it did seem as if I could scarcely keep quiet, but wanted to say to every one, "She is mine; my sister, my Birdie. And see, the great Dr. Gibson kisses her, and pets her, and isn't at all ashamed of her!" Indeed it was a great honor to be so noticed by the dear Doctor, for every one loved and honored and respected him. He stood at the head of his profession, and he had a great reputation for learning and experience; his opinion would command almost any sum of money, and there was not one in all that crowd of fashionable people but would have been proud of being known as a great friend of the old Doctor, and yet there sat my Birdie close beside him all the rest of the evening, with his arm around her and her pretty brown curls falling over his coat-sleeve, and she looked really like some sweet bird that had got weary of trilling among the clouds,

and had come down, tired, to rest itself in its own home-nest.

When the concert was over, the lady of the house, with many airs and graces, complimented Birdie on her success, and tapping the Doctor on the arm with her fan, declared he had hidden his lovely *protégé* in some cage purposely to surprise them all. And then she very patronizingly slid into Birdie's hand a bill. The child felt surprised ; and whispered to the Doctor that she did not want it—it was for the soldiers, not herself, she sang. So the Doctor presented it gracefully back to the hostess, saying it was Birdie's contribution to the soldiers.

We all three got into the Doctor's carriage, and he saw us two safely home, and then ordered the coachman to drive to his own house.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BIRDIE and I thought for many months that we should like to join the church. I said to her, "Birdie, it seems so mean, when the Lord has been so good to us, that we do not publicly acknowledge it—it looks as if we were ashamed of Him."

"I think, Jack, it would help us to be good thus to be united with His people; and more than all, I think it is His command, for when He partook of the last supper, He said, 'This do in remembrance of me.'" So we talked over the matter a long time ourselves and with Aunt Anne, and then we concluded to speak to Miss Gibson about it. She was very much affected when we told her, and I have no doubt that our conversion had been a subject of prayer. We both felt much attached to the minister, for he used to visit us

very often, and had been very kind to us, so that we never was abashed in his presence, as I have seen some young folks. He talked very freely to us, and we to him, on the subject of religion, and that is the way that people ought to do. We had neither of us been baptized, and we agreed that Birdie should take my mother's name, Mary; for we thought she must have had some other than the pet name of Birdie, although we neither of us knew what it was.

I was now eighteen years old. Birdie and I were able to support ourselves by this time, without any aid from Miss Gibson, although the good Doctor insisted still on paying for the music lessons, as he said he wished himself to give her her entire musical education. She had an excellent position in the choir in our church, and was so well compensated for her services that she would not allow me to pay Aunt Anne for her board, as she was earning just at this time more than I. In addition to this, she had several scholars in music, which

added to her income. Birdie had studied very diligently, and improved her time and opportunity, so that she had a better education than most young Misses whose parents pay large sums for their schooling. I also was getting along nicely—I had very good wages, and as I wasted no money in smoking, chewing, drinking, and gambling, I was able not only to support myself very comfortably, but to put money in the bank. My employers trusted me fully, as I was a good workman, and I tried conscientiously to do my best, and to serve them, “not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but the servant of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.” They knew they were able to rely upon my word; and so we worked together, master and man, as Christians ought to work, each trying to advance the interests of the other. They did all they could for me, and I the same for them. I prayed for them in our family worship, and I think Mr. Leggett did for me. The other

members of the firm were not Christian men ; I often wished they were.

Our home with Aunt Anne is not only very comfortable, but a very pleasant one. I think it is a Christain duty to make one's home cheerful and pleasant. Aunt Anne had no relatives ; we were all in the world whom she had to love, and she loved us very dearly, and we looked up to her as we would to a mother, so that we were mutually the source of great happiness to each other. The house in which we live is very small, but then we have it all to ourselves, and that is much pleasanter than sharing a large house with several families. Aunt Anne has a little money of her own, which her husband had left her. She hired the house, and we boarded with her. I wish you could see how pleasant our little parlor looked. The front windows faced southward, so that the sunlight made the room cheerful all through the winter. The canary hung in his pretty cage, and sang in the sun all day long. Aunt Anne was

fond of flowers, and people who love flowers always succeed in making them bloom better than other folks; flowers, like children, seem to know who loves them. Birdie and I made her a present one Christmas of a very tasteful rustic flower-stand, with several plants in bloom, and somehow she always had something in flower on that stand in the window. As Aunt Anne was very industrious, and Birdie very tasty, between them both they managed to make a great many pretty things to ornament the room. Every one, even Miss Gibson, used to notice how prettily our house was furnished, and what an air of cheerfulness there was about it. Although there is nothing costly there, and no heavy, expensive furniture, it is so thoroughly like a beautiful home that you could not fail to have the consciousness, on entering it, that a woman of good taste and refinement, and she a Christian, had had the arranging of it. Indeed she might well be excused, if it needed an excuse, for spending money to make our home pleasant and pretty,

because she did not spend her spare money in dress, as some girls do. Miss Gibson taught her very early in life, that it was vulgar to be so much dressed. That the false jewelry and feathers, and all the extravagances of dress which some silly girls put on, show not only great want of good taste, but an empty heart and a shallow mind. Birdie was always very neatly and tastefully, but very simply dressed. Her dress *never attracted attention*, unless by its neatness and propriety, and that is the rule Miss Gibson said every young girl should observe, particularly one thrown so much before the public as Birdie necessarily would be. Miss Gibson told Birdie, when she first sang in the choir, to be particularly neat and simple in her dress, as our choir faced the whole congregation, and she did not like to see her pet at any time in flashy colors, particularly so now, as it gave a bold look to even a modest girl to flash her sham-jewelry and flaunt staring colors in the face of the people in God's house. She said the term "feathered choir" used to

allude to the birds, but she thought it might equally be applied to some of our city choirs. Birdie made use of her talent for good ; she felt that she had no right to hide it in a napkin, or bury it in the earth ; she sang whenever and wherever she could, and thus earned a great deal of money for our various charities whenever she was called upon to do so. She often said that she had consecrated her voice to the Lord ; she spoke very sweetly yet humbly about her talent, for she always spoke and thought of it as some gift which our Lord had given her, and for which she must at last give back an account to Him. "I feel very thankful to Him for it," she would say ; "it has given me so much pleasure, and given me the opportunity of affording pleasure to others."

Oh, my dear Birdie ! it seems as if I can never tire of talking of her ; and although her name is no longer Birdie, but according to our baptismal names she is Mary and I am John, yet she will to me never be anything

else than my own dear Birdie. If all girls were as lovely and gentle and sensible as she, brothers could not help loving them as I do my sister. I once heard a young woman say that she wished she had lived in the millennium. I said to her, that the right way to bring the millennium would be for each one to be themselves just as good as they could be; for love brings love, and gentleness brings gentleness, and kindness brings kindness, and so on through all the Christian virtues.

The day before we partook of the communion, Birdie and I made Miss Gibson a present from our own earnings. We bought a handsome Bible, and had her name put on it, and inside Birdie wrote, in a neat hand, "Be not weary in well-doing." Aunt Anne, who carried it to her while I was at work and Birdie giving music lessons, said Miss Gibson was so delighted with it, she shed tears, and that she said, "Oh, how good the Lord has been to me!"

I think I may take these words of Miss

Gibson as the moral of my story. It is because to me, also, the Lord has been so good, that I want to tell other lads about it, that they may not be discouraged, but may be willing to try and do right.

I hope you will excuse me for talking so much about myself. I do not tell you these things because I think I have done so well and am so good; very far from it. When, long ago, I first worked in the Iron Works, there was a lad a little older than I who worked beside me in the shop. He was a great help to me, because he had gone through with exactly what I was then going through, and he *had learned* what I was learning. Now I want to be, to boys younger than myself, just what that boy was to me. I tell them the story of my life, because there's many a lad wanting to learn just what I have learned, and who is now going through the very experience which I have gone through. Telling them of these things may help them. I have had experience in both

ways of life. I have lied and cheated, used bad language, and lived fighting and stealing in the streets. I have, thank God, tried the other way also. I have tried to live honestly, soberly, industriously, giving my heart to the Lord, and trying truly to serve Him. Boys, I give my experience, that, in the first, I never found happiness—in the last I did ; and I advise you to try godliness, as being profitable for the life that now is, and for that which is to come.

There is another moral to my story, if young ladies will not think me forward in giving it. I wish more of their number would be like Miss Gibson. When I see them given up to all sorts of follies and gayety—to dress and dissipation on the one hand, and, on the other, when I see so many children in alley-ways and tenement-houses, I think to myself, how can they meet those children at the bar of God !

Even very good Christians might learn something from Miss Gibson, for they do not

all have her perseverance in well-doing. They are willing to help all the *good* little children they come across; but good children brought up in vice and poverty are very rare. When these little ones are profane and ill-tempered and vicious, they are hopeless of them, and let them go. What might have been the fate of Birdie and me had Miss Gibson been discouraged about us, for I have not had time to tell you the half of the trouble we gave her!

Christian effort is not always rewarded in the way Miss Gibson was rewarded for her care of Birdie—that I well know. The Master requires faithful labor, without the promise of success in this way. Miss Gibson labored as diligently for Ann Molloy as she did for Birdie; yet Ann ended her life, before she was sixteen, a miserable drunkard. I think the Lord will bless Miss Gibson for her labors in Ann's behalf just as much as in Birdie's. In both cases she did all she could. In the one her efforts were crowned with success; in the other she failed.

There is one of the Psalms of David which has always been a favorite with Birdie and me; one which we have both learned. It seems as if David must have written it purposely for us; but that is one of the peculiarities of the Bible. All Christians feel as if certain portions suit them so well, that they must have been made for them expressly. I do not think that I can close in any way that would express my feelings better than by using David's own words:

"I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

"My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.

"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

"The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

“ Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

“ Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

“ Depart from evil, and do good: seek peace, and pursue it.

“ The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.”

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